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CASE METHOD IN HUMAN RELATIONS:
THE INCIDENT PROCESS

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CASE METHOD IN HUMAN RELATIONS:

THE INCIDENT PROCESS

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CASE METHOD IN HUMAN RELATIONS

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To
R.C.C.
And
A.D.S.

From the murmur and subtlety of suspicion
With which we vex one another
        Give us rest.
Make a new beginning...
And with some finer essence of forbearance
        Temper our minds.

ARISTOPHANES

PREFACE

"The time is ripe for empirical studies of human relations, [and of] social situations. But . . . the presence of [an] observer usually changes the situation. We need, then, . . . participant-observers . . . who will try experiment after experiment, and note results. . . . We want to find out what [could be done] in making human interplay productive. This we can discover only by experiment. . . . The methods of physical science are observation and experiment; these should be the methods of the social sciences."

Mary P. Follett made that comment in her book *Creative Experience*, published in 1924. Since then, considerable progress has been made in the social studies, chiefly owing to close observation and systematic experimentation. But nuclear scientists have far outstripped us. Their experiments, in doing things *to* people, have now made it possible for man to destroy himself. How might those of us who focus on doing things *with* people catch up with the nuclear physicists? And what will happen if we don't?

Norman Cousins has said that our main job today is learning how "to make the world safe for diversity." Mary Follett believed that "diversity [can] *do* something for us" if we treat it as a challenge to achieve the insight required to work out "integrative solutions" for differences which divide us. Our experience convinces us that case method, when applied experimentally and imaginatively, can be an effective way to work with other people, dealing productively with differences, whether the differences are on a scale which keeps nations in a state of cold war or such that unions and managements deal with each other at arm's length.

This book is an interim report on some of our observations and experiments, chiefly those made since 1950 when we began working with the Incident Process. We developed this variant of traditional case method because we weren't satisfied with the results (previously obtained by the senior author) in using case method as a means of learning what it takes to live productively with other people.

Do we expect too much of case method, and of the people who use it? In our opinion, to expect anything less is to overlook the greatest potential values of case method. Our thesis is this: Case method can be most useful, when *applied experimentally in actual situations*, as *a means of gaining and sharing experience*. In other words, case method can do most for anyone if, instead of applying it merely academically, and with the purpose of

criticizing what other people have done, he uses it to help himself live through events alertly, objectively, imaginatively, and appreciatively.

Our views on case method show up in the structure and style of this text. For one thing, instead of separating chapters and cases, we have liberally sprinkled case material throughout the book, starting on the first page. All the main ideas and many subsidiary points are illustrated by case references, case examples, or full case reports. In making this use of case material, our purpose has been to do more than offer a book *about* case method. If we have succeeded in throwing any light on general ideas by referring to actual case situations, and in lighting up everyday situations by highlighting general ideas, then we have demonstrated two important characteristics of case method.

But the possibility of applying case method in connection with any text depends in large measure on the reader. In your "case," it can't be accomplished without work by you. As you read this text, you will find that we ask many questions. And perhaps you will feel, at first, that this style asks too much of you. But as you think out your own answers, you will be working with us by case method. And you can experience several of its chief advantages. For instance, the process of developing your own ideas will be far more interesting to you than if you were merely to read what we think. (However, if you're interested in what we think, you'll have no trouble in finding out.) And the product of your independent thinking will be more relevant to your own experience than our ideas could be. Also, your own ideas will be more likely to stay with you than anything you could pick up merely by reading.

Because we believe that case method has almost limitless possibilities for everyone, *if* it is used in everyday living, we have written this book not only for specialists. It is meant for everyone who has any interest in what case method is, and in how a person might use case method to step up his capacity for living productively with other people. This book, then, is written for you—among others. But if your interest is wholly professional, or merely general, perhaps not all of it is for you. You might want to skip two chapters. Which two? That depends. If your concern with case method is entirely technical (for example, because you are a teacher of business policy, or of hospital administration), you might want to skip Chapters 9 and 10. (They are devoted to such general questions as: What is experience? How do we get it? How can case method be used to extend and enrich everyday experience?) On the other hand, if you don't expect to use case method intensively, either as a professional teacher or as a student, then you may want to skip Chapters 7 and 8. (They consist chiefly in descriptions of skills that can be practiced during a series of case discussions, and of difficulties which often come up.)

The eleven case reports given in various parts of the book (see Appendix

I for abstracts) are taken from a variety of settings. In this way we hope to illustrate the idea that, *wherever people do things together, the situation can be analyzed—and could be lived through—as a case in social relations.*

Incidentally, since the central question throughout this text is: "How can a person make his human relationships genuinely social?", a question that you might well ask is: "Then why didn't you use the phrase 'social relations' in your title?" Here's our answer. A number of knowledgeable persons convinced us that the term social relations would confuse some readers and antagonize others. To many people, apparently, the word social suggests a convivial occasion, something on the order of a cocktail party. To others social is associated primarily with *social work,* a specialized profession, regarded by some as a dull form of do-goodism. And recently, social relations has become identified for many persons with the *antisocial* aim of manipulating people. Not wishing to become involved in any such misconceptions before we have a chance to explain what social means in this text, we used the word "human" on the outside of the book. Once you get into the text, we hope you will agree that a human being can realize his full potential, and a human relationship can be fully productive, only by becoming genuinely social.

And now a word about the human relationships which have meant so much to us while this book was in the making. During (and before) the ten years that we have been working on this text, so many people helped us, and taught us, that to thank each of them here is impractical. Hundreds of students showed us the need for something like the Incident Process. And many of them had a hand in developing it. Associates, too numerous to mention, have given us ideas, criticisms, and encouragement. At M.I.T. alone, we have special reason to be grateful to the late Joe Scanlon, to Fred Lesieur, Charles A. Myers, Douglas McGregor, and Herbert Shepard. Each of them helped us to understand things we needed to know.

But among all our friends, the two to whom we have dedicated this book did most for us. For many years, Richard C. Cabot inspired and taught us. By what he was, and did, and cared for, and tried to do, even more than by what he said and wrote, he set standards which we can never meet—or forget. When appraising a new idea, we always ask ourselves: What would R.C.C. have thought of it?

Alfred Dwight Sheffield we first knew through his writings. After he became our close friend and associate we came to admire him even more than was possible at a distance. We owe him much as a teacher, a "Dean of Round Tables," a student of industrial relations and of social relations, and a brilliant exponent of case method. We are also deeply grateful to him for criticizing two early versions of this text. (Like many other students of his, we got valuable help from the notes headed: "Comments by A.D.S.")

The various drafts of this manuscript were copied by several different people. We take this opportunity to express special thanks to the three who did most of the copying: Dorothy Hewitt, Mary Payne, and Pina von Henneberg.

If it were possible to name so many names, we should also like to thank —individually—all the teachers and students, in many parts of the world, who have used, enjoyed, and criticized the Incident Process.

Finally, we hope to be indebted to you, too. Won't you let us know what you think of this book? What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it? Where is our writing unclear? Where do you disagree with us, and why?

If even a few discerning readers answer those questions, we shall have further reason to be grateful. Won't you be one such reader?

Paul Pigors
Faith Pigors

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Part Five. More Case Reports

PART ONE

CASE METHOD AS A WAY OF LEARNING

CHAPTER 1

CASES IN SOCIAL RELATIONS: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY STUDY THEM?

> Most knowledge will distract us, if we let it, from the job all knowledge is for. That job is becoming, and helping others to become, more perfectly men.[1]

People often talk about "case study" as though this term had the same meaning for everyone. Actually, studying even one case could never be exactly the same experience for any two people. One reason for this is that every individual brings something different to bear on a case, because of differences in his temperament and previous experience, for instance.

But there are other reasons, too, why studying cases is different for different people. What case study means to anyone depends, among other things, on what he means by a case, and also on his aim in studying cases. In order to avoid unnecessary confusion at the start, therefore, we'll try to make clear what we mean by a case. And perhaps the simplest way to do this is to give a sample case report.

CASE I. A DISPLACED SEMINAR GROUP

(Communication: Theory and Practice)

People immediately involved: Teacher, twelve graduate students, and two carpenters.

Scenes: Scene 1: A seminar room in the new library.
Scene 2: A lecture room in Building 2.

Time: Thursday, November 1, 1951, 10 A.M. to 12 noon.

PROLOGUE

At 10:00 A.M. the teacher was still putting the finishing touches on his teaching plan for the day. It was his practice to work on such a guide just before

[1] I. A. Richards, "The United Nations and the Peace." Unpublished manuscript.

each class. Experience had taught him that he never did his best when he went in cold. But today another feature of his teaching habits was lengthening the warm-up period until he was in danger of being late to class. His latest find was the Sheffields' new book, *The Mind of a "Member."* He planned to use their symbols, C (conditioning), M (meaning), and R (response), in explaining a theory of communication.[2] He would then apply these symbols to the case, *A "Personal" Complaint*,[3] that had been assigned for students to analyze before class. He was eager to experiment with this approach and pleased with it for two reasons. First, it seemed promising in itself. Second, it would serve to reintroduce Professor Sheffield, and he was always happy to hitch his wagon to that star.

When the teacher's watch said that his time for preparation was up, he gathered his papers together and hurried off to class.

SCENE 1

A SEMINAR ROOM IN THE NEW LIBRARY

At 10:05, the last minute of professorial grace, he reached his regular seminar room. The door was open and the twelve students were all seated around the table. One of them was working out some problem with a slide rule. A few others had the textbook open in front of them and seemed to be discussing the assigned case. Others were chatting.

The teacher dropped his notes on the table and headed for the blackboard, talking as he went. He began at once to draw a diagram showing the communication channel and the two-way process by which a communication is sent out, received, interpreted, and responded to. The students asked questions as the diagram went on the board. Discussion soon centered on that phase in the communication process where the person who has received an external stimulus (or message) interprets it (largely in terms of his preconditioning attitude, or C).

THE INTERRUPTION

At this point, two carpenters walk in. The teacher turns around, chalk in hand, and looks at them inquiringly.

OLDER CARPENTER: We're supposed to work here now.

TEACHER (abruptly): Oh, no you don't! Not while I'm lecturing. We're using this room till twelve o'clock.

(The carpenters retreat without further protest. The teacher firmly closes

[2] You need to know about Professor Sheffield's use of these symbols. Otherwise it is impossible fully to appreciate the singularly apt timing of the carpenters' entrance in Scene 1 of the case and the significance of the dialogue immediately afterward. The three symbols direct attention to the following features in the process of two-way communication. The preconditioning attitude (C) is an important conditioning factor in response. It plays a large part in determining the meaning (M) that a person assigns to an external stimulus, such as a word or act. His answer, or response (R), to the external stimulus is, therefore, also affected by his (C). See A. D. Sheffield and Ada Eliot Sheffield, *The Mind of a "Member,"* pp. 27–35. For the complete reference (and for references to all other authors mentioned in this text), see Appendix II.

[3] Paul Pigors and Charles A. Myers, *Personnel Administration*, 4th ed., pp. 559–568.

the door and returns to his diagram. But through the glass panel he notices that the workmen remain standing just outside, apparently irresolute. Almost at once they come in again, the older carpenter in the lead as before.)

OLDER CARPENTER (pointing to the conference table): We have to get our things.

TEACHER (handing him a sweater and cap): O.K. Here they are.

(At the other end of the table are a jacket and a knapsack which the teacher takes to be a tool kit. These articles he also hands to the carpenter.)

FIRST STUDENT: [4] Hey! Those are mine!

(The teacher apologizes and gives them back. Other students laugh.)

OLDER CARPENTER (jokingly to helper): Well, I guess we'd better just go out and celebrate St. Patrick's Day today.

(The carpenters then leave the room but continue to stand outside while the older man fills and lights his pipe.)

TEACHER: All right, now let's get on with our work.

SECOND STUDENT (ordinarily a rather silent member of the group): Professor, did you see the notice?

TEACHER: No, I didn't. What was it?

SECOND STUDENT: We're supposed to be in Building 2, Room 229.

TEACHER: Where is this notice?

SECOND STUDENT (pointing): On the door outside.

TEACHER (moving toward the door): Is that so? Let's see.

(He opens the door and finds that below the glass panel a filing card is taped to the outside of the door. It carries the following message in red pencil:)

> 14-E-307
> On Nov. 1 & 2 only, all classes assigned to this room are transferred to Room 229.
> Registrar's Office

(The carpenters watch these proceedings with apparent interest but without comment.)

TEACHER (reading to himself): H'm! That's different. (Turns to the OLDER CARPENTER): I'm sorry. I didn't see this notice before. Of course, we'll move right away. Too bad I held you up in your work.

OLDER CARPENTER: Oh, that's all right. Stay if you want to. It don't make no difference to us. We get paid anyway.

TEACHER: No, we don't want to interfere with your work. We'll leave right away.

OLDER CARPENTER: Don't leave on our account. We're in no hurry. Are we, Jack?

JACK (grinning): That's right. We can start the holiday now.

(At this point, members of the seminar group gather up their things and leave for Building 2, Room 229, an ordinary lecture room.)

[4] The designations FIRST STUDENT, SECOND STUDENT, etc., merely refer to the sequence in which these students speak during this scene.

SCENE 2

BUILDING 2, ROOM 229

Hurried along by the teacher, the students file into the room. The FIRST STUDENT immediately selects a chair in the front row, where he sits down, alone. Others group themselves farther back.

TEACHER (before the last student has settled into his seat): Now, here's a perfect example of just what we've been talking about. I always say our own experience is the best case material. So let's drop theory for a minute and analyze this incident. We can use it to illustrate and test the theory.

FIRST STUDENT (heartily): That suits me. I've been wondering if you'd call that good personnel work. I wanted to see how an expert in personnel administration would handle a thing like that. Naturally, we expected a perfect performance . . . but . . .

TEACHER: You've certainly got me there. I couldn't give myself a good mark for that. I was much too abrupt.

SEMINAR MEMBERS (in chorus): You're telling us!

TEACHER (laughing): I'll tell you how it happened though, and it's a wonderful example of my C. You fellows know what's been going on around here, all this hammering and banging. So when the carpenters came in and said: "We have to work here," I saw the situation like this. *We'd* be trying to talk, and *they'd* be hammering away so we couldn't hear ourselves think. You know how it is. Even if the racket is in the next room, it's almost impossible to concentrate. And, after all, we were in our regular room, so I just assumed there must be some mistake. That's why I said so firmly: "Oh, no you don't."

THIRD STUDENT: I understand how you felt. The other day I was at the blackboard when some workmen in the next room were hammering on the pipes. I thought they'd shake the board down.

FIRST STUDENT (persisting): But according to the *theory,* shouldn't you have listened?

TEACHER: Of course I should. *That* would have been good personnel work. It would have given the man a chance to explain.

FOURTH STUDENT: That's another thing. How about communications? Would you say the note on the door was a good medium for the message?

(The point is discussed, and all agree that a telephone call to the teacher's secretary might have been more effective. It is brought out that he had not seen the notice because the door was already open when he arrived.)

TEACHER: As a matter of fact, how many of you fellows *did* see the notice?

(A show of hands indicates that three students had seen it. They had been the first to arrive.)

FIRST STUDENT: But even if you didn't see the notice, what about all the ladders and the boxes of insulating material in the hall? Didn't you see them either? I should think *that* would have told you something.

TEACHER: Yes, of course I saw the stuff in the hall. But you know how much junk is lying around these days. I just didn't pay any attention to it, partly, I suppose, because I was in a hurry.

The ensuing analysis developed into such a lively discussion that it could

not accurately be reproduced, even from group memory. Most class members spoke up at some point. Sometimes several were speaking at once.

Toward the end of the first hour, the teacher brought the discussion back to the assigned case, *A "Personal" Complaint*. At this point, one student who had previously been silent voiced a retroactive complaint:

"Well, it's about time. I was beginning to think we'd never get back on the track."

Without pausing to justify the interruption in the planned sequence of work, the teacher launched a question to show how the assigned case illustrated the theory outlined in the Sheffields' book. Vigorous discussion followed. As usual, the time was up long before everyone had finished what he wanted to say.

Hoping to make the most of the opportunity for all participants to connect theory and practice in this instance, the teacher made a final suggestion: "Look! Over the week end, why don't you boys each write out your account of this mix-up about rooms. Of course, I'm not making it a requirement. But it certainly would be interesting. I'm going to do it myself." [5]

ANOTHER START

The case report stops here. But, as in other situations that are reported as cases, neither the sequence of action nor the consequences came to an end at this point. Nor have we finished even with the case report. We shall come back to it, both for illustrations and for analysis.

But before going any further, let's take account of Humpty Dumpty's advice to Alice to "start at the beginning."

This advice seems sound. The catch in it, for authors, is the difficulty of identifying the beginning. Communication by writing is always a tricky experiment in human relations. And no part of it is trickier than the beginning. Which shall take precedence: reason or psychology? Reason says: "Start with a statement of aims." Psychology says: "Start by getting the reader's interest. And don't forget," psychology adds, "that you're writing a *case* book." That final comment proved decisive. But case students dislike either-or solutions. Why reject any useful mode of thinking? Why not have two beginnings? So, having first made a bow to psychology, our second bow is to reason.

Why Study Cases in Human Relations?

The aim of any case student depends, naturally, on his center of interest. Our interest is in relationships between people. And our goal is as easy to state in words as it is difficult to translate into effective action. We study cases *about* social relationships with the aim of learning how to do better *in* our own relationships with people.

Only if we students of social relations keep this aim constantly in mind,

[5] You may not be surprised to learn that the FIRST STUDENT was the only one (except the teacher) to perform this extra assignment.

and consistently try to approach it in action, will case method deserve a better reputation than it has had. Many people think that case study in social relations is an academic pastime which consists chiefly in throwing stones. The mistakes that other people make show up clearly under the magnifying glass of case analysis. But we make sternway, not headway, if we let it go at that. When cases are factual reports of situations in which people were trying to get results together, of course one can see that there was room for improvement. And perhaps, in analyzing these reports, case students tend to overemphasize the dark side of the picture. But in doing so, our aim should never be to pick holes in what other people did. That's too easy. But it's not educational. Far less easy and far more enlightening is the search for common denominators, for instance, between the kinds of difficulty that keep coming up among people everywhere. What seems to be accountable for the most frequent forms of friction and waste motion? Can we understand how, and why, "people in cases" so often block each other? If so, can we develop in ourselves some of the foresight, and insight, that are needed to prevent and remedy these same difficulties in our own daily relationships?

We Need More Understanding

As one studies cases, it looks pretty obvious that "people in cases" lack insight. Often it seems that they aren't even trying to understand each other. They are too busy getting results. Once a student notices such a shortcoming in cases, he can easily corroborate his finding in daily experience, usually even in his own behavior. One root of many difficulties between people is certainly a lack of the will-to-understand. But even developing the wish to understand other people, though a long step forward, wouldn't be enough to improve matters much. We must actually achieve more of the kind of understanding that is needed.

What Kind of Understanding?

Probably no one would deny that, if we are to prevent and to overcome misunderstandings, each of us needs more insight. But usually what everyone agrees about turns out to mean something different in everyone's mind. So let's be specific. What kind of understanding are we trying to develop when we study cases with the aim of learning how to do better in our daily relationships with other people?

Ability to think clearly is certainly part of it. Most of us need to use our minds more reasonably and objectively than we have in the past. In our dealings with people, none of us can be absolutely objective. So, we might as well be realistic about that. But we can make headway in that direction. And one way in which we can work toward it, in working on cases, is by learning to see the connection between the big general ideas

that everyone recognizes as valid—in theory—and the run-of-the-mill events about which all of us make daily decisions.

Many difficulties between people need never arise if we could all use our heads, all the time, and not be pushed around by our feelings. But human nature being what it is, we can't count on being able always to think reasonably. And if anyone could do that, he might find it even harder to understand the rest of us.

The capacity to appreciate is another essential element. In order to develop more understanding of human nature, and to cope with it in ourselves and in other people, we need the capacity to appreciate the feelings and purposes that are the springs of action in everyone. The qualities of feeling, and of purpose, do not lend themselves to exact knowledge. But by sympathy and social imagination we can extend the boundaries of our minds. And of course, unless we do see below the behavioral facts that can be measured, we overlook much of what is going on in any situation where people are doing things together. What happens *in* people, as experience, determines their behavior even more than what happens *to* them.

But of course appreciation is inadequate by itself. Unless it is held in check by reason and by common sense, it tends to push us into sentimentality, do-goodism, and just "being nice to nice people."

Common sense. Practical judgment is another essential ingredient in the kind of understanding that we need. Neither the most logical solution, nor the kindest, is of much use if it won't work. But common sense alone—the mere recognition of what is workable and expedient—is far too limited to prevent or to resolve most of the difficulties that come up between people.

Only when we blend reason, appreciation, and practical judgment can we develop the kind of understanding that we need in order to work effectively with other people.

Can Such Things Be Taught?

If you agree that this blend of understanding would be useful, your next question might be: Can it be taught? In the old-fashioned meaning of the word "teach," the answer is "no." Neither reasonableness, sympathy, practical judgment, nor a blend of all three could possibly be handed over intact from someone who has such insight to someone who lacks it. But everyone can acquire more insight if he is willing to work hard and consistently on himself. And the conditions for learning are even more favorable if he is working on this assignment with other people who are committed to the same purpose—because they see their current assignment as part of a continuing educational "process which aims at the improvement . . . of men, in themselves and in relation to society." [6]

[6] Mortimer J. Adler, "Labor, Leisure, and Liberal Education," p. 57. On p. 70 of the same article, Professor Adler makes three other statements with which we heartily

Becoming Case-minded

A common misconception about case study often interferes with getting a full measure of learning from cases. This misunderstanding has to do with what a student of social relations can most profitably look at and look for. At best, his center of attention does not remain long on any remote case. His central interest is not on the facts of any case, nor on bits of information that he can pick up, nor on nuggets of knowledge that can be dug out of cases and exhibited afterward to impress someone else. When a student's aim requires that he learn how to make changes in himself, his chief concern is not even with decisions and recommendations that can be made about a whole series of remote cases, and then filed and forgotten. What he is centering on is the effort to find ways to make his mind broader, more receptive, and more flexible. He can do this by becoming *case-minded.* The greatest claim that we make for case method is this: by thinking seriously and responsibly about real cases, one can become increasingly case-minded as a participant in current events. By thinking and talking with other people about cases, one can learn to look more objectively at one's own case, to appreciate more vividly how other people see and feel about a given set of circumstances, and to look harder for what is at stake in any social situation—not only right now but also for the long run. This kind of learning doesn't come easily or quickly. In fact, no one who seriously embarks on this kind of study is ever ready to graduate—in the sense that he knows all the answers. But that doesn't discourage the kind of person who makes a good student. To make headway toward an important, long-term aim is surely enough. And that can be done. To some extent, anyone can learn how to narrow the gap between hindsight and foresight. By doing so, he learns how to live through events with something of the perspective that is so easy to achieve afterward—especially when one is conducting post mortems on the behavior of other people.

Freedom to Think and to Act

Alfred North Whitehead used to say that where there is interest there is life. And sometimes it seems as though the interest of studying cases is great enough to keep a person alive forever. There is endless fascination in trying to combine two kinds of freedom that everyone has. In analyzing a case about social relations, a person is relatively free to think ob-

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agree: "Vocational training is learning for the sake of earning . . . therefore, it is an absolute misuse of school to include any vocational training at all. School is a place of learning for the sake of learning, not for the sake of earning. . . . Liberal education is learning for its own sake or for the sake of further education. . . . Professional education can be both vocational and liberal."

jectively, to put his whole mind on the assignment of working out *effective ways for people to get results together*. But in cases that concern past performance by other people, the student of social relations has no freedom to act. The remoteness of these situations—in time, place, and actual responsibility—has deprived him of that freedom before he even gets going on them.

On the other hand, when he turns his attention away from a remote case and returns to his own social relationships, then he has some freedom to act. But how free is he, now, to think objectively, to use his intelligence in seeking the best possible all-round solution for the difficulties that beset him—among other people? Do his feelings limit his freedom to think reasonably? Does the "I-view" prevent him from getting perspective on the situation as a whole? For many of us, most of the time, the answer to these last questions is "yes." But to the extent that we can hang on to our habits as case students, even when we are living through events, our behavior can become more productive as we combine the kind of freedom that is typical of looking back on events with the freedom to act, which exists only here and now.

How Do We Learn?

Since this kind of learning is what we are after, as students of social relations, we have to get beyond the kind of verbalizing that is sometimes thought of as education. We cannot be satisfied with merely repeating and memorizing inert ideas, learning of the sort that Nathaniel Cantor characterizes as the "oogle-is-boogle" variety.[7] Anyone can learn to repeat a simple formula, even one that is meaningless to him. But what has he got, even while he can remember "oogle is boogle"?

A classic example of the oogle-boogle attitude toward learning was cited by Robert Blakely: "A professor of physics asked a student, 'What is electricity?' The student puzzled, then replied: 'I did know, but I forgot.' The professor smote his brow. 'My God! The only man who ever knew what electricity is has forgotten!' "[8]

How could a student get into such a fix? In looking for what is accountable, one must admit that our educational system is partly to blame. Unless a student had found that he could get by merely by memorizing and parroting words about ideas that were inert in his mind, he couldn't get away with fooling himself that he had forgotten what no one has yet understood. The oogle-is-boogle kind of learning was obsolete before anyone started going to school. The wonder is that so many people for so many years have put up with it. How could anyone seriously suppose that it has anything to do with education?

[7] Nathaniel Cantor, *The Teaching-Learning Process*, p. 45.

[8] Robert J. Blakely, "The Free Individual and the Free Society," p. 88.

If anyone undertakes to assimilate new ideas in order to become more effective in action, his learning has to be more than the triple play with words. That parody of education consists in picking up words, by ear or by eye, committing them to memory—perhaps by way of a notebook—and then handing them back, on examination papers, in written reports, or by sounding off to one's associates.

Getting an education consists in much more than trafficking with words or accumulating unrelated pieces of information. "Genuine learning ... is a remaking of experience. Learning is integral." [9] It is done by the whole person. And whenever this kind of learning takes place, the whole person changes to some extent.

Conditions that Favor Learning in a Case Study Group

In studying cases, the wish to learn and the steady purpose to do something about what we learn are essential preconditions for making progress in self-education. And one great advantage for a case student in the field of social relations is that the conference room can be made into a workshop. He doesn't have to wait till he has finished a series of discussion meetings in order to start practicing what he is learning. He can translate ideas into action most quickly and easily if the discussion leader believes in the workshop idea, and illustrates it by what he says and does. Every discussion meeting is an experiment in social relationships. Does each participant see it and treat it as such?

Whenever people talk about a case, or about anything else, a social situation exists. And when people continue to work together, a process of "progressive adjustment" [10] brings changes in them and therefore in the situation where they are working together for results. In this respect, the case of a study group is similar to any other work situation. Naturally, the conditions for mutual education are more favorable in a study group than in many other kinds of work situations. But that circumstance need not spoil the experiment. On the contrary, it helps us to get started, which is what we need, since in the fine art of social relations most of us are still beginners. One of the most favorable conditions in a study group is characteristic of any good discussion. Ideally, every Member is committed to getting results *with other members,* and not just *through* them, as means to his ends.

But in spite of all its advantages, even the work situation of a discussion group never turns out to be absolutely ideal. There is ample opportunity for participants to observe how difficulties arise even between people who are obligated to try and get results together, and who are free from many of the pressures that bedevil people in so many other kinds of work

[9] Cantor, *op. cit.,* p. 293.

[10] Mary P. Follett, *Creative Experience,* p. 127.

situations. Every discussion member, therefore, has a chance to learn by doing. He can also learn by noticing, and reflecting on, what seems to favor or to hinder productive interaction.

Steps in a Process of Learning from Cases

Of course, most case students don't start with any such conception of their assignment. The process of learning how to learn from cases is gradual at best. Usually, people in case study groups begin with the notion that a case is necessarily a written account of what other people did, at some other time and place. They can get beyond that limiting idea, but such progress doesn't come about automatically. Students need to work hard at the imaginative task of getting the feel of each case, "to understand it from the inside outwards." [11] Only after a case student has achieved some appreciation of the insiders' view of a case can he fully profit by analyzing the situation as an outsider. Another long step forward is taken when case students begin to look for recurring similarities, or common denominators, between a variety of case situations. Later, they can recognize that *no case in social relations is entirely different from any other situation in which people are doing things together.*

By this time, a case student has reached the point where he is learning something that will be useful to him both now and in the future. For instance, he is able to see that the recurring mistakes made by so many "people in cases" are no different in kind from the mistakes that the rest of us make here and now. "People in cases" are evidently impatient to get results. And since most of them seem to take the strictly I-view, they appear to be chiefly interested in the kind of results that pay quick dividends for them personally. So they don't bother to think much about what is at stake in the long run or about what is happening to other people's feelings and purposes. Some of these people don't take time to explain, let alone listen, to their associates or subordinates. Sometimes they even interrupt someone else who is trying to explain. Occasionally they forget to look into the facts before making a decision that has consequences for other people, too.

One big troublemaking factor for people in cases seems to be that they do so much "thinking with their feelings," instead of with their minds. Of course, when one appreciates what they have to contend with—both in outside pressures and from their own feelings—one can hardly blame them for acting that way. But it certainly is easy to make suggestions as to how people in cases might do better.

By the time a case student has got this far, he's in a good position to get farther. It's only a short step from here to the realization that we're all in the same boat. And that being so, it would seem that similar methods

[11] Charles Morgan, *Liberties of the Mind*, p. 141.

of navigation might be useful for all of us. By this time, a student of cases is squarely confronting the idea that *every situation where people work together to get results can be regarded, lived through, and learned from as a case.*

Sometimes a student reaches this point by asking a case-minded question that opens out into action. For instance: "If the recommendations of our study group are so hot for all those people, in all those cases, what's the matter with them for us?" By the time a person is ready to consider that question, he is practically committed to applying, in his own action, some of the general ideas that are so clearly applicable in cases.

By now, he is embarked on a process of learning that is literally endless. He can go on making progress, as long as he lives, in the process of becoming increasingly case-minded in the thick of events. By learning how to see his own situation as a case, a person becomes able to recognize some mistakes before he makes them. Often, he may not be able to start *looking on* at his own situation, like a case student, until after he has made some mistakes. But even in such a case, he can try to learn from his own errors so that he might avoid falling into the same trap again. At whatever stage he succeeds in gaining some perspective on his own experience, he can get new ideas and an interesting panorama by imagining that he is *looking back* at it, as an outsider. If you've never tried doing this, you might be surprised at how much the picture changes and at how many opportunities open up for doing things differently. When a person can look at himself as though he were a participant in a case situation, his power to think freely and inventively is greatly increased. *In view of the whole situation, including all the other people involved, what would he recommend that "this character"—himself—should do about it?*

The Job All Knowledge Is For

One thing that all of us confirmed case students recommend and try to do is to learn from experience. An important part of such learning consists in distilling the essence, or central ideas, from everyday situations. Our purpose in doing this is in line with Professor Richards's generalization quoted at the beginning of this chapter. We want to learn in order to live more productively as human beings and with other human beings.

A case student's interest in trying to learn from cases need not be academic. He can constantly try to see and to develop practical applications of abstract ideas. This is one reason for translating words into action. And certainly in our field of interest a natural place to start translating is with the term "social relations."

Social relations is such a familiar label that it is easily repeated and heard merely as the same old sound. What does it mean—for action? It might mean this: All of us live, and learn, in social relationships. Wouldn't

it therefore seem fitting for each of us to learn all he can about living as a socially minded relative? "We are members one of another." "No man is an island unto himself." Such statements can't be dismissed as nothing more than religious aspirations or poetic fancies. They refer to everyday experiences that no one can afford to ignore.

The general idea of Membership seems, therefore, like a good starting point for anyone who is seriously interested in learning how to become more productive in his relationships with other people. And once he begins thinking about the practical implications of trying to become socially minded, he has hold of something that can help him to analyze and to correct his own behavior, namely, an unwarranted assumption that often makes trouble between people. How could anyone expect to avoid having and giving trouble if he acts on the assumption that he is nothing more than an entirely independent, isolated individual?

Perhaps you may think that the idea of Membership is too general to be of much practical use. Or, would you say that most of us are members in so many different kinds of groups that there are no common denominators? There certainly seems to be some substance to both these objections. So let's get down to cases and try to see how much.

In relation to opportunities and obligations of Membership, every case in this book is a case in point. But the only one that we can look back on so far is Case I.

Membership as Illustrated in Case I

In that situation as in others, degrees of effectiveness in communication were associated with feelings and purposes of Membership. These subjective forces were evidently more decisive than efficiency in using words. For example, it is apparent that the carpenter and his helper understood each other, in more ways than one. Their mutual relationship was clearly of the kind, and at the stage, that makes words comparatively unimportant yet easy to understand and to interpret by the person to whom they are addressed. But when these men first barged into the seminar room, there was no sense of Membership between them and the teacher. In feelings and purposes, the carpenters were in one world and the teacher in another. This *subjective* kind of separation was more decisive for interaction than was the *objective* fact that all three men were in the same room. For practical purposes, during the first exchange of remarks they were not even within shouting distance of each other. Time and annoyance could have been saved if, from the outset, the teacher had felt and showed a sense of Membership with the maintenance men, instead of taking it for granted that they were outsiders intruding into his room.

In that situation there were three reasons why the teacher was more obligated than the maintenance men to meet the claims of Membership.

First, as leader of a student group, he had managerial responsibilities toward them. Second, he was an official representative of the university. Therefore, he had a stake in everything which concerned that organization. Third, he was teaching a theory of communication. This circumstance obligated him to exemplify, as well as to expound, the principles of effective communication.

Similarly, though to a lesser extent, the claims of Membership were an obligation for the other people in the situation. For instance, the three students who had seen the notice before class might have spoken up at once. If they had done so, the misunderstanding with the maintenance men need never have arisen.

Even the workmen had some stake in the goals of the university because they were regularly employed there as maintenance men. But their behavior (as noted in this case) shows little awareness of responsibility toward their own department, and none for the university as a whole.

Looked at from outside, and afterward, it is easy to see how interaction between these people could have been improved if all of them had acted on their common stake in the organization, instead of concentrating on their separate concerns. By overlooking this common bond, they all wasted time and invited friction.

Communicating Is More than Talking

Perhaps you are thinking: "Your illustrations from Case I all concern communication. And that's only a small part of getting on together." True enough—if by communication you mean nothing more than exchanging ideas through the medium of words. But isn't communicating far more than that? What people do, the way they do it, and even the manner and tone with which they use words usually communicate their attitudes, feelings, assumptions, and intentions more accurately than do the words themselves. This fact is acknowledged in the familiar adage: "Action speaks louder than words." Incidentally, this is one reason why we don't separate communication cases from other situations in which the interactions of people are observed and reported as cases. Every case in human relations is also a case in communication. Whether or not one sees, in a given case, illustrations of effective and ineffective communication depends mainly on what one is looking for.

For instance, would you say that the following case example illustrates communication or Membership? Or, would you prefer, as we do, to see it as an illustration of both these general ideas, and of others, too?

MOTORISTS ARE MEMBERS

For many years in Massachusetts, there has been a traffic law on the books requiring motorists to behave like responsible Members of the motoring public,

and not merely like individuals going their separate ways in cars. This law (as amended in 1949) states that: "Every person operating a motor vehicle, before stopping said vehicle or making any turning movement which would affect the operation of any other vehicle shall give a *plainly visible signal* either by means of the hand and arm in the manner hereinafter specified or *by a suitable mechanical or electrical device or devices.*" [12] Thus it is mandatory for motorists in Massachusetts to act like Members. But within our memory there was no attempt to enforce this law before the autumn of 1951. In October of that year it was announced that beginning on November 27, a fine of $25 would be imposed for a first offense in failing to signal for stops and turns.

During October and November there was considerable evidence that people were seriously preparing to obey this law. Many motorists could be observed practicing hand signals, and garages were besieged with requests to install automatic signaling devices. Unfortunately, on and after November 27, in spite of all the advance warnings, this traffic law remained little more than words. When there was little enforcement, many drivers who had begun to live up to their responsibilities as Members of the motoring public soon fell back into their former individualistic habits. But some people kept it up. And by comparing notes with other drivers, we find that many people share our feeling that signaling is a sociable experience, as well as a practical expedient. By acting on the obligation to signal one's intentions to other drivers, and on receiving such signals from them, one gets some sense of kinship even with total strangers.

WHERE HAVE WE GOT TO?

In this chapter we've skimmed over quite a bit of ground. After giving a sample case report, we stated a long-term aid of studying cases about social relations, suggested the kind of understanding that seems needed by anyone who is seriously interested in learning how to live like a socially minded relative, touched on learning as a process of making changes in one's self, introduced the idea of case-mindedness (as a way of living through events with other people), and emphasized the general idea of Membership—as a starting point for studying, and living through, social situations.

WHAT NEXT?

In the next chapter we shall proceed more slowly, looking into the following questions: What are the characteristic features of the case method? And what are some of the specifications that need to be met if these features are to be productive for students of social relations?

[12] Chap. 90 of the General Laws, sec. 14B, "inserted by chap. 279 of the acts of 1949."

CHAPTER 2

FEATURES OF CASE METHOD

> It should be the chief aim of a university professor to exhibit himself in his own true character—that is, as an ignorant man thinking, actively utilizing his small share of knowledge.[1]

For case study in social relations, Whitehead's comment is peculiarly apt. When it comes to understanding other people, each of us is ignorant—at best. Therefore, the true function of a teacher (or training director) can be clearly demonstrated in this limitless field for study. As an apt and persevering student, a teacher can serve members of study groups by stimulating their interest rather than by "telling 'em," and by helping them to develop their aptitude for learning how to learn, independently and from each other.

Whatever variant of the case method is used to stimulate self-education and productive interchange, the interrelated features remain the same. These are (1) the case report, (2) case discussion, and (3) case analysis (some systematic way of thinking about cases).

THE CASE REPORT: FIVE SPECIFICATIONS

It's a bit of history. An adequate case report is both more and less than a story. To write or to read a case, to report it or to listen to it merely as a story, is to misapprehend an important point about case study. For example, considered as a story, Case I is both trivial and dull. Yet as a case, study groups have found it both interesting and useful. Weaknesses in it as a story are that nothing much seems to happen, and the dialogue is commonplace. Such dramatic and literary shortcomings could be corrected by doctoring some of the facts and sharpening up the conversational bits. But any such "improvements" on the facts would spoil the case by de-

[1] A. N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*, p. 58.

stroying the integrity of the report. Rule one in writing any case report is: Be as accurate as you can.

It's a picture. Another important specification for a case report is that it should show more than it tells. It's a picture rather than a lecture. But it should be a stereoscopic picture, with depth. A good case is a rich source of material, from which students can derive insight and form their own opinions.

It indicates relationships. A case report pictures people acting and reacting in relationships—both formal and informal. Formal relationships can be shown on an organization chart. But that kind of picture, though reasonable and functional, is never wholly factual, partly because it is static. Every human relationship is constantly changing, being strengthened or weakened by feelings and purposes which have been expressed in words and in action. For this reason among others—

A case should depict motion. In portraying outward events, it should show that "facts" are in process. Some are in the making. And each fact that is so is turning into something else. Some cases are written in a way that makes people and events seem relatively static. In reading such cases, it may even look as if the situation stopped—at the end of the report—or at least as though all difficulties had been overcome and all grounds for misunderstanding had been removed. Such reports can be misleading.

Some of the motion that is pictured in a case report should be in the world of inner events, where outward happenings are transmuted into experience. A reporter can provide that kind of case material by giving verbatim excerpts from what people said or wrote and by describing expressive tones, gestures, and other indications of personality in action.[2]

For instance, a case writer gives a glimpse into the private world of William Masterman (a plant superintendent) by quoting what Masterman once said on the subject of even-handed justice: "When any of my children need punishing, I whack 'em all." Such a statement is like a shaft of light, illuminating one corner of what is mostly obscure.

It should have integrity. A case reporter should avoid the temptation to tell more than he knows, even though, as a character sketch, an honest report may show that the reporter didn't thoroughly understand his subjects.[3] For a novelist it's permissible to tell what people thought (but

[2] Case writers can learn much from Gamaliel Bradford, who developed a method of "writing portraits" (or psychographs). *See The Journal of Gamaliel Bradford.*

[3] Seasoned reporters aren't afraid to admit how little they understand, even of what they see. Who knows all? As Albert Schweitzer has said: "We wander through life together in a semi-darkness in which none of us can distinguish exactly the features of his neighbors; only from time to time through some experience that we have of our companion, or through some remark that he passes, he stands for a moment close to us, as though illumined by a flash of lightning." *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, p. 91.

did not say) and what they felt (but did not outwardly reveal). But the code of a case writer obligates him to report nothing more than he saw, or knows to be factual, leaving his readers free to make their own interpretations and to draw their own inferences.

An Inherent Limitation

Anyone who tries to extend his experience by studying cases should remember that however realistic a picture may be, it's not the same as reality. Therefore, in looking at people whose behavior is portrayed in cases, one is doing something quite different from what needs to be done in living through events side by side with people in the flesh. The contents of every report have been filtered through the mind of the reporter. The report is the product of selection, arrangement, and (to some extent) interpretation. What the reader gets is, therefore, only some information about facts as seen by someone else.

An Unnecessary Limitation

Sometimes the filtering process is deliberately carried to the point where facts are altered or invented so that the case may conform to a predetermined pattern. The so-called problem case is one such product. Usually it contains only a single problem. Or, if there is more than one, each is presented as though it were something separate and static, a neatly packaged difficulty which might be labeled: "Hold till called for."

Why are such formalized, oversimplified cases written? Perhaps because that kind of case is easy to teach and makes it easy to measure learning (by giving the student a mark). But such advantages are far outweighed by one disadvantage, which the following example may serve to illustrate.

A CASE EXAMPLE: THE BRILLIANT STUDENT WHO FAILED TO MAKE GOOD

A young man graduated with honors from a top-ranking business school. Presumably, therefore, he should have been well prepared to tackle administrative problems. But he failed to make good on his first job. He rationalized his failure by saying: "If only someone would give me a problem, I know I could solve it. But all I can see here is a mess."

What had gone wrong? As it happens, we know that the cases he had studied were highly formalized. In them, too much had been done for him, and not enough had been asked of him, or by him. When he set to work on each case, it was already too remote from actuality to offer him adequate practice in asking exploratory questions, in putting his finger on one difficulty among many, and in seeing the significance of facts which had not been sorted out for him. Such cases had done him a disservice. What he had learned from them was that solving problems and

making decisions require nothing more than answering questions which other people have asked.

Special Opportunities Offered by Cases

However, when cases are true-to-life pictures—accurate but not unrealistically neat—studying them can help a person to understand his environment. In fact, some of the differences between case reports and current events are favorable to learning.

Individual Differences Show Up

By studying a case report, students may become aware that in any social situation [4] the feelings and purposes of every participant are facts, of a sort, facts that need to be reckoned with. As soon as a person has grasped that idea, he is in a position to recognize the impracticality of recommendations along the lines of "If I were you. . . ." He can now see through the unwarranted assumption that, for practical purposes, you and I are identical. And this more realistic orientation may stimulate him to work harder for the gift of *seeing others as they see themselves, and visualizing their situation as it looks to them.*

Harriet Ronkin quotes a student who "had come in to discuss his written report on a case called 'Joseph Longman.' At length he said, 'I now see that in analyzing the case I should have tried to be Joe Longman. Instead, I assumed that Joe was me. He talked the way I do, he felt as I do, the things that are important to me were important to him. I never really looked at Joe.' " [5]

General Ideas and Principles Show Through

General ideas and operative principles often seem to stand out more clearly in cases than when one is involved in the rush of events. When people analyze case reports, they usually advocate action that accords with ethical principles. Isn't this chiefly because, in studying a case, most of us find it natural to look for the kind of behavior which would be suitable in a given system of relationships?

Limitations

Anyone who seriously studies a realistic report of an actual situation can get ideas and hypotheses to test directly—in his own experience. But there are certain limitations and risks in solitary case analysis. For example, there is the natural tendency to assume that one's first ideas are right. And

[4] We use the term "social situation" (hoping that the context will clarify its meaning) because it is shorter than a more explicit phrase such as "any situation in which people are doing things together."

[5] Harriet O. Ronkin, "What One Student Learned," p. 59, note 2.

it is difficult to see through one's unconscious assumptions and prejudices, or to get beyond the preconceptions and misconceptions that each individual inevitably acquires in the course of his experience. Such limitations affect what each of us can see in any situation and can think about it—alone.

CASE DISCUSSION

Advantages of Discussion as Compared with Solo Analysis

During any case discussion, a discerning listener may come to see a little more than he would have seen by himself. Each person in a study group inevitably sees every case a little differently from everyone else. One consequence of this is that when discussion of some difficulty takes place, the sure-fire solution proposed by one person may look impractical to others. If each member of the group then tries to understand why other members think as they do, everyone is in a position to get more out of the discussion than if he had considered only one opinion—his own.

As this exercise is repeated, in case after case, valuable by-products appear. For example, each member of the group may gain more insight into his own way of thinking, talking, and listening. When he does so, he may be moved to work harder as a responsible agent in group process. And as he tries to be a more productive member of the work group, he naturally becomes more aware of other members. He notices and tries to understand individual differences. From this, greater appreciation and respect for his associates may follow.

When the subject of case study is social relationships, such consequences are more important than any of the technical skills that are usually regarded as the whole point of studying cases.

Robert Dubin, from his own observation of case study groups, has commented on two of these valuable by-products of case discussion:

> Joint analysis of cases gives you a great deal more insight into your own thinking. Something that sounds good rolling around in your head is weak when you tell it to others. Let me illustrate. It is not uncommon in class discussions of these cases to have one of the participants start out confidently, only to end with, "That doesn't make sense." He has seen the weakness of his statement while making it.
>
> Working together with others in thinking through phases of a case develops your respect for other people. . . . I have known members of a class to open the discussion with the statement, "I don't see anything in this case," or "This case seems so obvious—there is only one angle to it." After a 50-minute discussion of that same case, the original skeptic is very likely to concede, "Well—there is more to that case than I first saw in it." [6]

[6] Robert Dubin, *Human Relations in Administration*, p. 385.

However, such desirable consequences don't occur automatically merely because several people are talking about the same subject at the same time. If people are to get anywhere by talking and listening together, certain specifications have to be met.

Five Specifications for Productive Discussion

In our opinion, the following are among the most important:

Discussion should always be focused, so that at any given time the whole group is centering attention on the same place (one section of a broad topic, one aspect or critical question in a case). Meeting this specification entails discussing one issue at a time. And it requires that all conferees talk at the same level of abstraction at any given time. You have doubtless experienced the sense of confusion and frustration that can permeate a group when different people are considering several issues at once, or when some people are talking at the level of specific facts while others are cruising in the rarefied atmosphere of highly abstract ideas.

A group cannot properly be said to be thinking together if a number of different topics simultaneously occupy the attention of various self-constituted subcommittees, each of which is temporarily holding its own conference on some point of special interest to its members. A peculiarly troublesome variant of this behavior can be observed when some members of a discussion group—unable to set aside their personal difficulties—keep introducing red herrings in the form of items from their "hidden agendas." [7]

Discussion should always be sufficiently specific so that everyone can know what he and the others are talking about. Time and good will are dissipated and the focus gets blurred whenever talk drifts into vague generalities that have no precise meaning for anyone.

The atmosphere of discussion should be free, informal, and experimental. The spontaneity that makes a bull-session so enjoyable in the early stages is a favorable condition for productive thinking. (But it doesn't have to be associated with the planlessness that makes a typical bull-session so unproductive.) Four freedoms which promote productive case discussion are these: (1) to "try out ideas for size," (2) to cite experience, (3) to speak one's mind (if necessary, even in disagreement), (4) to propose and try experiments (for example, in case analysis, or conference method). Without such freedoms, people can't reasonably be expected to make progress toward an important aim in social relationships, *learning how to participate in shaping group opinions.* If every member is to do his share in that task, each must be able to feel that his off-the-

[7] Leland P. Bradford, "The Case of the Hidden Agenda."

cuff comments are needed and wanted, in the early stages, as part of the makings of the considered opinions that are being shaped.

Discussion should get somewhere in covering a topic or exploring a case. Although productive talk is always centered, it becomes boring if it remains long on dead center. And the possibility of broadening one's scope of perception—during a discussion—depends in part on getting extensive coverage of a topic or case.

Discussion should get somewhere in promoting agreement and mutual understanding between the people who are talking and listening.

During a series of discussions, members of a study group can make considerable headway in learning how to work together by developing their capacity for mutual accommodation. Anyone who is interested in productive interaction can at least make a start in learning to recognize and respond to what other people think and feel, but without surrendering ideas or standards which he continues to see as important—in the light of his own insight and experience.

When discussion is free and people are interested in the topic, differences of opinion come out. The question then becomes: What is the most productive way to treat such differences? Arguing, or debating, is one way. In that kind of talk getting somewhere consists in convincing a majority of listeners, or an umpire, that the opponent's view is wrong, or weak. But anyone who undertakes to speak and listen as a conferee embarks on the task of doing his share in mutual adjustment. In conferring (or discussing) no one even begins to get anywhere until after he responds, with understanding, to the ideas, experiences, and values that other conferees are speaking for. After such a start, conferees can work outward (from their previous opinions) and move forward together toward an opinion that is different from what any of them had at the beginning. "The process of group thinking is not solely one of interchange between minds; it is also one of changes within minds." [8]

Most people seem to enjoy taking part in discussions that meet such specifications. The quality and pace of such an interplay of minds—on a subject and with each other—can make it recreational as well as creative. And experience suggests that when a discussion leader helps conferees to exercise skills of teamwork, most people respond by giving the undivided and sustained attention with which they enter into other team games.

But the freedom that permits everyone to gain a full measure of learning during discussion doesn't seem to come about without leadership.

[8] Alfred Dwight Sheffield, "Things Learned about Thinking by Thinkers in Groups," p. 58. Throughout this section, we draw freely on Professor Sheffield's article. Although published nearly twenty-five years ago, it represents advanced thinking today. In our opinion, it deserves to be far more widely known than it has been.

Pioneers in group dynamics [9] have developed a theory of democratic leadership which has proved its value in case discussions. The nub of this idea is that leadership is not necessarily a set of privileges confined to one person, in a given situation, by reason of his superior position. Instead, it can be recognized and implemented as a set of functions. These can be distributed among all members, as widely and as rapidly as their interests and abilities permit. Among the most important of these leading functions are the following:

Six Leadership Responsibilities

Helping a group to get started. It is generally agreed that some stimulus is needed at the beginning of a discussion period. But there is little agreement as to how or by whom this stimulus can most usefully be supplied.

Exponents of permissive leadership [10] in its extreme form seem to believe that a teacher (or other discussion leader) is encroaching upon the freedom of his fellow students if he does anything more than stay in the same room with them.

This is no place to conduct a one-sided debate on group leadership. But perhaps it is in order to suggest that either extremely permissive leadership or autocratic control is likely to impede productive interaction. Certainly few people today would defend—in principle—the kind of domination, by telling 'em, that was formerly accepted practice, not only in classrooms but even in executive conferences.[11] On the other hand, is it realistic to insist that a discussion leader should be the only member in a discussion group who contributes nothing positive from his experience as a veteran member of discussion groups and as a case student from way back?

The following answer has been suggested by an experienced discussion leader: "There is never any sense in denying anybody any help that is available through others with more experience, *provided that* [our italics] the person who was supposed to furnish the help [does not] change roles with the one to be helped, so that the teacher becomes the doer and the student the helper." [12]

[9] See Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander (eds.), *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory.*

[10] Headquarters for this school of thought in America is the National Training Laboratory in Group Development at Bethel, Maine. This laboratory is sponsored jointly by the National Education Association and the Research Center for Group Dynamics, University of Michigan. For an authoritative statement of their principles and practices, see *Explorations in Human Relations Training: An Assessment of Experience:* 1947–1953, Leland P. Bradford, director.

[11] Martin Kriesberg, "Executives Evaluate Administrative Conferences."

[12] Earl Kelley, *The Workshop Way of Learning*, p. 69.

Perhaps many people who use case method might agree that a teacher can suitably offer his experience as a point of departure, but that he should try to help the group quickly pass the point where they depend on him as *the* leader.

One way in which a teacher can use his experience to spark a discussion is to ask some question about a case. Naturally, as each student sets to work on the case, he will learn most when the talk comes close to what Dr. Richard C. Cabot called "the growing edge" [13] of his mind; "that is, the point where he demands an answer to a question of his own. He will assimilate knowledge which answers his questions, those he spontaneously asks or can be roused to ask. He will not assimilate the answer to any question that happens to interest his teacher."

Another effective way to help people get off to a good start on a case is to present it in a short and dramatic form. Experience shows that lively discussion starts naturally from a brief presentation which emphasizes the drama of a case, as in a short film, or in our written Incidents, or by role-playing a brief sequence of action.

But helping members of a discussion group to get started consists in much more than merely stimulating them to begin looking into a case. An important part of a discussion leader's assignment is helping people to get off on the right foot—as group members *working in* a social situation, while they *work on* a relatively remote case.

Helping to establish a friendly atmosphere. In order to do his share in creating a climate that favors learning, a leader needs to know something about the kinds of response which promote or impede harmonious relationships. Anyone who has listened to many discussions has had opportunities to notice what happens when people give free rein to impulses of rugged individualism, partisanship, or combativeness. Most of us feel all these impulses at times. But if we act on them, we hamper discussion.

For example, anyone who behaves like a rugged individualist talks too much and too dogmatically. He holds the floor when he has got it. He interrupts and contradicts other people. At times he may deliberately give someone the brush-off. At other times he appears to be unaware that anyone else is trying to talk. He seems to take it for granted that no one except himself has anything significant to say. That assumption was naïvely expressed by a five-year-old child who said: "The reason I tell other people what to do is because my ideas are so much better than theirs."

[13] Richard C. Cabot, M.D., and Russell L. Dicks, *The Art of Ministering to the Sick*. In describing what he meant by "the growing edge," Dr. Cabot wrote: "The growing edge of anyone's knowledge is at the point where his questions push out like the edge of a tissue culture. Perhaps on most college subjects the student asks no questions at all. Then he will get no living knowledge of those subjects until his curiosity can somehow be aroused."

Another attitude that interferes with productive discussion is that of partisanship.[14] A partisan immediately sees and takes one side of a case or an issue. He takes a dim and slanted view of everything outside the position that he stakes out as his.

Combativeness is often associated with partisanship. But when members of a discussion group give way to it, talk is apt to bog down. Perhaps someone even keeps repeating himself, apparently on the assumption that others must agree with him if only they would listen to what he says.

During a series of discussion meetings, everyone can become less isolationist, less biased, and less combative. But this change is unlikely to come about in many members except in a friendly atmosphere. Sometimes spontaneous friendliness unites people from the start. But in some groups a few members think they can show their mental caliber by being hard on the people in cases, and sharp with each other.

Occasionally, a leader needs to exercise a protective function. Suppose someone is rash enough to keep talking (perhaps in order to prevent someone else from getting the floor) while he is in the process of shifting from one opinion to another. What he says, during that period, may make little sense if judged as a considered opinion. At such times, a leader's job has been described as follows: "The leader will often protect a member from being 'refuted,' even though uttering fallacy. His confused remarks of the moment may be a little verbal smokescreen behind which he is decorously changing his mind." [15]

When a leader consistently makes the best of everything that is said, others tend to follow his example. In this way, tensions in and between certain members can gradually be eased.

Keeping group talk going. This part of a leader's assignment calls for good judgment as well as good will. Sometimes talk that is slowing down can be revived if someone summarizes what has already been said. At other times, the remedy may lie in getting a person to stop monologuing. Or perhaps what is needed is to stimulate the impulse to go ahead after someone has silenced another person by making a statement that acts as a "stopper." [16]

Demonstrating the role of a discussion member—as a partner. Especially in the first few meetings, a discussion leader should try to demonstrate a way of speaking and listening which expresses (and evokes) the attitude of a partner, one who recognizes and values his interdependence with others. Anything that suggests authoritarianism is out of place in

[14] Irving J. Lee, *How to Talk with People*, pp. 81–89.

[15] Sheffield, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[16] Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 93–102. Under the term "stopper" Professor Lee included any remark that puts people off the track, or seems insulting, or in any other way halts the forward movement of talk on the subject under discussion.

discussion. The characteristic attitude of a conferee is conveyed by any remark which (explicitly or implicitly) asks: "What do *you* think about this?" The same general attitude can be expressed in any low-key statement which invites a considered opinion in response.

Introducing procedures which facilitate productive interaction. Specialists in group dynamics and in communication have developed procedures which have tested value for productive discussion. As an appointed leader of discussion groups, a teacher has opportunity (and responsibility) to introduce some of these techniques. Among the most useful are *coercing agreement, creative thinking,* and various systems for working out group decisions.[17]

Providing opportunities for discussion members to take the lead. A teacher (or training director) who believes that leadership can contribute to productive discussion should give all members in each study group a range of opportunity for serving as leaders. This can be done by inviting everyone to prepare and present at least one case and to lead discussion on it. Other leadership skills can be practiced by anyone who serves the group by recording and reporting on their performance during a discussion.[18] Other useful ways of serving a discussion group in leading roles are to make summaries (for example, when the talk starts slowing down) and to serve as spokesman for an opinion group (when differences of opinion arise as to how some difficulty in a case might best be handled).

When case students alternately work and follow each other in such leading roles, they may be stimulated to think about possibilities and requirements for effective supervising and constructive following—as interdependent activities.

What Is Left for the Teacher?

If every member of each study group takes some share in leading, what is left for a teacher to do—as a leader? There are a number of ways in which he can continue to serve the group if he is willing (and able) to adapt his behavior to current needs in a changing situation. As he does so, he can show himself in his own true character—that is, as an "ignorant man thinking" and as an "enabler." By being "on tap, not on top" (to borrow a phrase of Professor Sheffield's), he can avoid the undesirable extremes of doing *for* other members things which they could

[17] For descriptions of these devices, see Irving J. Lee, "Procedure for 'Coercing' Agreement"; Alex F. Osborn, *Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Thinking;* and Norman R. F. Maier, *Principles of Human Relations: Applications to Management.* In Chap. 8 we show how these procedures can be used in a study group.

[18] In this connection, see the excellent work by Prof. Robert F. Bales, "In Conference." See also Robert F. Bales, E. P. Hare, and E. F. Borgata, *Small Groups: Studies in Social Interaction.*

profitably do for each other, and of doing nothing *with* others as a working partner.

By being sparing in what he says and does, a teacher can earn a tribute like this:

> Of a good leader, who talks little,
> When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
> They will all say, "we did this ourselves." [19]

Limitations of Discussion

Any discussion has limitations as well as possibilities. One inherent difficulty is that no one can give his whole attention simultaneously to several different kinds of mental activity. Many people find it distracting to alternate rapidly between listening to others, interpreting what is said, thinking out their own opinion, and expressing it. Another limitation, imposed by group discussion, is that the time during which a whole group can work together is too short to permit anyone to get (and digest) all the food for thought that is provided by any adequate case report. Individual differences account for other difficulties associated with case discussions. For instance, a person whose mental pace is deliberate may soon get left behind (even if a leader exercises some restraint on members who naturally think faster). And an introvert finds it difficult to think out loud in public. Perhaps he hesitates to say that he has changed his mind after listening to another member. Or, he may worry about the idea that whatever he says won't compare well with what other people contribute.

Such limitations would be even more serious than they are if case study consisted only in talking about cases. But fortunately, in case study, there is no need for anyone to limit his work to the relatively brief time during which the whole group talks together.

CASE ANALYSIS

If analyzing cases is to contribute a full measure of learning—about productive social relationships—what specifications need to be met? Here are a few suggestions:

Four Specifications

Case analysis should be realistic. Studying cases can't be expected to pay off in thoughtful action unless the way in which people think about cases is demonstrably applicable—and useful—in current situations. Too often, case analysis has been practiced as little more than an academic

[19] Witter Bynner, *The Way of Life According to Laotzu: An American Version*, pp. 34–35.

trick. But students aren't learning anything practical if the problem solving that they do by case method is inapplicable except to problems of the sort that are found in written cases. It's not even much of a trick to solve a problem that has already been isolated, formulated, and pinned down in words, so that it stays where it is and as it is until it has been dealt with. On the other hand, many administrators have learned that it is quite a trick to develop the judgment needed to know which of several difficulties, all interdependent and all changing, can most profitably be tackled right now. And often it's even more of a trick to spot such difficulties early enough so that there is still scope for preventive action.

If case method is to be useful for supervisors (and for young people who hope to become supervisors), it must offer practice in the skills needed to recognize difficulties at an early stage and to sort and solve the kinds of everyday difficulty that arise in any organization.

There should be method to it. A second specification is that case analysis should be methodical. If the ultimate goal of studying cases is to modify habitual responses in everyday life, isn't it reasonable to ask that there should be some system to the way in which people are invited to think about cases?

Many teachers who use case method seem to fear that if they recommended any system of analysis, even as a starter, they would be depriving their students of freedom to think for themselves. But our experience has convinced us that this fear is without substance—at least in working with young Americans. Of course, it would be contrary to the spirit of case method to ask anyone to accept any system of analysis *uncritically*. But after an experimental attitude has been established in a study group, students may be invited to consider the idea that case analysis should proceed by some kind of system. They can then use a system (one that they read about or that is demonstrated by the teacher) as a point of departure from which to go ahead by trying experiments and developing modifications of their own.

The method of analysis should be comprehensive. Case study can offer practice in asking productive questions, in knowing how to get relevant information, and in exploring all sides of an actual situation. No one can ever get all the facts about a case, any more than he can about any situation that he encounters in his firsthand experience. But analyzing cases can help a person to recognize that certain kinds of questions yield a high rate of return. By repeatedly asking questions to open up a case, and by taking account of the answers to questions that other people ask, a student can gradually develop a relatively comprehensive check list of exploratory questions. When such a checklist is consistently used, it can help a person to avoid overlooking some area that may be important in a case (or

in a current situation) even though it is not sufficiently conspicuous to catch the eye of an untrained observer.

Analytical method should be flexible. But when a system of inquiry is set up in advance, it should not be regarded as anything more than the merest start toward exploring any situation. And no method of analysis should be allowed to harden into a rigid set of preconceptions as to what must be so in every case. A plan for systematic questioning can be most useful when it serves to keep a person's mind alert, reminding him that before trying to understand any situation, he can profitably look into it from a number of different angles.

Limitations of Case Analysis

The actual results achieved by case analysis have not always equaled what seems theoretically possible for students to learn. Why not? Perhaps the following factors are largely responsible for the gap between expectations and accomplishments.

Many people don't like to think by themselves, for hours at a time, at the level of concentration required for thorough analysis of any situation. Even students at school have shown a tendency to skimp on such homework—*if* they are expected to do it entirely alone. And supervisors, who are busy getting out production, have often shown (by inaction) that they have little time or taste for academic homework.

A second difficulty is that many people, in school and out, are unaccustomed to using words in solitary thinking for the purpose of clarifying vague impressions and unformulated ideas. In order to think clearly, they seem to depend on the incentive supplied by the wish to communicate directly with someone else, preferably in face-to-face talk.

A third limitation of solitary case analysis has already been suggested; namely, that when anyone studies a case by himself, he is likely to be unaware of the prejudices and preconceptions that slant his view, in some places, and shut it off in other places.

Another circumstance which prevents case analysis from being as useful as it might be in everyday living is that relatively few people take it with them when they leave the conference table. No method of situational analysis can do much for anyone unless (1) he becomes sufficiently interested in it to try it out in a variety of situations where he is a participant, and (2) after doing so, he adapts it to meet his own needs and resources.

As the three features of case method merge during a series of discussion meetings, many of these limitations can be overcome. And sometimes when people deplore how little they (or others) have learned, it's because they have unrealistic notions as to who needs to do the learning, and

what can be learned (by case method, or by any other method) during a few weeks or months.

WHO NEEDS TO LEARN?

In business and industrial organizations, three unrealistic assumptions have often been made: (1) that first-line supervisors are the only organizational members who need to learn about human relations, (2) that the kind of self-education needed to become fully productive as a working partner can be achieved in a few hours, and (3) that, by analyzing cases, supervisors can learn how to make right decisions about every difficulty which they are likely to encounter.

Many people who have observed and analyzed what happens in organizations are convinced that first-line supervisors are by no means the only ones who could learn by case method. Even top executives are not so different from the rest of us that they know all there is to know about working with other people—as Members. And when opportunities to learn by case method are limited to the lowest echelon of management, the prospects are dim that what is actually learned can materially affect the organization as a whole.

Equally out of tune with the facts is the assumption that the whole lesson of case method can be learned in a few hours. But any thinking person can make a beginning, at any moment. For example, a top executive—after taking the lead at one meeting in a study group whose members were foremen—expressed surprise and respect at what his first-line supervisors had been able to do with a case. "That's something I won't forget," he said. Another important possibility for his organization was suggested by his further comment: "I learned more about conducting a conference from that one experience of leading discussion on a case than from all the books I've read about conference method." If that kind of learning is applied and communicated by members of top management, it may gradually be diffused throughout the management hierarchy, until it makes itself felt at the work level.

A third assumption (about what can be learned) may prevent people from noticing that anything important has been accomplished during a series of meetings conducted by case method. But any alert observer who tries to see what happens in and between people who work together—as case students—may notice that important changes in relationships and behavior are being set in motion.

One change that practically always comes about is that relationships become increasingly friendly. As this happens, the work goes better and more easily, because people become interested in, and capable of, helping each other. As they develop ideas and swap experiences in connection with

cases, each member has occasion to see how much the others can contribute. When case students are members of the same organization, they may have worked together for years. But perhaps they have never been in a position to notice how effectively they could work *with each other* to implement purposes which they have in common, and to work out integrative solutions to problems that plague them. For example, department heads (though referred to as "members of the management team") often work primarily for their own departments, regarding each other as rivals or even as enemies. But in a study group, even rivalry tends to be friendly. And often the mutual understanding and respect that develop during case discussions carry over into daily work relationships.

An illustration of such a change in attitude was suggested by a foreman's comment at the end of a series of case discussions. He was an "old-line" foreman in a group where most of the others were college graduates. In view of the barrier that usually separates supervisors with this difference in educational background (and in hope for promotion), his comment is all the more significant. He had been asked: "Do you think that group members have learned anything from each other?" His answer was: "Yes. Knowledge and respect."

"WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?"

A doubt felt by many people as to what can be learned from cases was implied by the following remark (made at the last meeting in a twelve-day conference): "We've had some wonderful discussions. But I have a strong hunch that someone back home is going to ask: 'What have you learned?' "

Among the answers immediately offered by other members of the group were these: "It's not like that. It's not what you get out of any one case. It's a long-term proposition." "It's completely divorced from the work on cases. It's how a man changes in his job. It happens after the course is finished." "The real results won't come for two or three years."

There were other indications that something significant had been learned by the people who made these off-the-cuff remarks. Here are a few comments which they wrote to the conference leader shortly afterward:

FROM L: As I go back over our two weeks together, it now seems that the biggest change was in my mental picture of people. Take X, for example. I can't believe that she changed as much as my picture of her did. And the same with the others. Did they change? Or was it I? I suspect both did.

FROM M: The course was not only an instructive experience in itself, but it

caused me to become well acquainted with some of the finest people I know. It continues to be a source of amazement to me that we became such a well-knit, cooperative, and purposeful group in the short space of two weeks. I suppose you have seen this happen many times before, but it was a revelation to me to run into so many people worth knowing, all at once.

FROM N: Personal experiences that I obtained during the course: You obtain a sense of universality when you verify that in spite of different economic, social, and cultural patterns, the problems and reactions of companies and people are similar.

For me, the best thing about this conference was the sense of fellowship and responsibility about principal objectives of the course, created and kept for all participants. (This comment was made by a Cuban.)

FROM O: One of the things I got out of the conference was an idea. From our experience together, doesn't it seem that in order to become considerably more effective in getting results with other people, it may not be necessary for any of us to get any smarter? Shan't we be able to tap more brain-power, in every group we're in, if we can help to develop the friendly atmosphere in which it's easy for each member to toss out ideas, to acknowledge and correct his mistakes, and in various way to get beyond the limits of his previous experience?

FROM P: I think one of the biggest impressions that our course left me with was of how helpful group effort was in solving problems, and how much genuine pleasure for the individual could be derived from such cooperative effort. I think this method can be used to great advantage in helping research people to develop and grow, and that in this way the daily technical problems will, of course, tend to be solved more efficiently and satisfactorily. . . . I had never before realized so vividly how much more a group can accomplish, than an individual, in working on a problem. It was rather awesome to note all those different minds coming in from different angles to help block out and define a total picture. . . . Then there was the more personal experience of realizing more acutely than ever before what I as an individual contributed to the over-all pattern, and how I could enlarge upon that contribution. Lastly, there was the wonderful feeling that we all had, before the course was over, of having made staunch friends with the others in the group.

Is this kind of experience completely divorced from cases? Or might one say that it is a valuable by-product of the interplay between minds working by case analysis during case discussions?

THE METHOD OF CASE ANALYSIS MAKES A DIFFERENCE

A person who observes members of study groups has occasion to notice that no two people seem to achieve precisely the same kind or amount of self-education during a given length of time. Individual differences

(for example, in ability, interest, and mental pace) doubtless account for much of what is learned—and not learned. But it also seems that the method (or lack of method) by which people analyze cases makes considerable difference in what they can learn.

In the next three chapters, we describe and illustrate a method of case analysis that we use and recommend. But before going forward, we'll go back, summing up the main ideas presented in these first two chapters.

RECAP[1] OF PART ONE

The first chapter provided some material for answering seven questions:

1. *What is meant by a case report?* Case I was a sample.

2. *What is the aim of studying cases about social relations?* In our opinion, it is to develop ideas and gain skills for doing better *in* one's relationships with other people. When we case students keep our eyes on this aim, what we learn won't "distract us from the job all knowledge is for."

3. *How can studying cases promote this long-term aim?* Partly by helping us to recognize, and to develop in ourselves, the kind of understanding that is so evidently needed by people in cases.

4. *What kind of understanding is this?* It's much more than being well informed about facts. It's a blend of three elements. These are:

a. The power to think clearly and reasonably.

b. The capacity to appreciate somewhat more than can be precisely known or proved.

c. The ability to exercise practical judgment, or common sense.

5. *Can such insight be acquired by thinking and talking about other people's experiences, as reported in cases?* Yes. But only when students of cases test in their own experience what they pick up from cases, and then do something about what they agree upon as valid in theory. Genuine learning that goes deep enough to enable a person to make changes in himself requires more than the triple play with words: picking them up, putting them down (in notebooks), and handing them back (on examination papers). Learning is "a remaking of experience." Studying cases gears in with the process of achieving experience when case method begins to be built into our minds as a way of looking at people and happenings, in order to learn. When anyone has begun to develop such case-mindedness, he can carry this state of mind with him wherever he goes. This provides the best answer to the question so often asked about case study: Will there be any carry-over?

6. *What materials for case-mindedness can be found in case study?* Of course, the essential ingredients are in the minds that do the studying, and not just in the cases. But by using imagination to appreciate what

[1] The term "recap" is used here to indicate that instead of being a strict summary, this section is more like a musical recapitulation, in which the restatement of a subject is relatively free, and something new can be added at the end.

was going on in cases, and then searching for the general ideas that are illustrated in them, a student can recognize similarities in all situations where people do things together. The past experiences of other people, as reported in cases, are not essentially different from what goes on in our own immediate environment, *if* we explore it at the level where generally valid principles of behavior appear. Case-mindedness can be like a pair of bifocals, helping a person to adjust his focus quickly from short-range to distance. In this way one can get some perspective, without blurring his view of what is going on here and now.

7. *Is there any one general idea, among all these common denominators, that makes an especially appropriate point of departure for case study in social relations?* Yes—Membership. What does this mean—for action—*by other people* in cases and *for us* in a study group and elsewhere? What opportunities and responsibilities are implied by the fact of belonging—as Members—to families, clubs, organizations, nations, and even the human race?

In the second chapter we considered the three features of case method, with special reference to the study of social relations.

1. A *case report* should be a picture of some actual situation, preferably a stereoscopic picture—with depth. It can show relationships between people, both as formally planned (the kind that appear on organization charts) and as informally developing (because of the way people feel about events and toward each other). It should also picture motion, showing process and trends in outward events, and indicating tides and cross-currents of purpose in the world of inner events (where outward happenings are transmuted into individual experience).

But a case report can be worse than useless if it tells more than the reporter saw (perhaps more than anyone can know) or if it presents a seriously distorted picture. And every case report has one inherent limitation. Even the most realistic picture is necessarily, and radically, different from reality.

Among the special opportunities presented by cases are these: It may be evident that the feelings, expectations, and purposes of all participants in the case situation are facts that need to be understood by anyone who hopes to make intelligent recommendations as to what people in cases could do. Also, general ideas and operative principles are apt to stand out more clearly in cases than during the rush of events.

2. *Case discussion.* Some specifications are that case discussion should:

a. Be *focused* (so that, at any given time, the group as a whole is centering attention on one place, and at the same level of abstraction).

b. Be *sufficiently specific* (so that everyone can know what is being talked about).

c. Take place in an atmosphere that is *free, informal, and experimental*

(such that everyone is encouraged to make off-the-cuff comments, and to speak his own mind).

d. Get somewhere (covering a range of features in a case, and of ideas suggested by a case).

e. Get somewhere in promoting mutual understanding, respect, and agreement among the people who are talking together.

What Leadership Functions Can Be Helpful?

Effective leadership can help people learn how to play the game of discussion—as teammates. And for this purpose, leading seems to be most effective when practiced as a set of functions to be distributed among group members. Leading functions include:

1. Helping a group to get started (at least on the first few cases)
2. Helping to establish a friendly atmosphere
3. Helping to keep the talk moving
4. Demonstrating a discussion member's role, *as a partner*
5. Introducing procedures which facilitate productive interaction during discussion
6. Providing opportunities for each member to *learn by doing some of the leading*

The Teacher's "True Character"

When members of a study group take over a large share of the leading during case discussions, the true character of the teacher stands out. He can serve the group primarily as "an ignorant man thinking," and as an "enabler."

Limitations of Discussion

One inherent limitation of any discussion is the impossibility of giving one's full attention to several different kinds of mental activity at the same time. Another limiting factor is that the time during which a whole group can work together on a case is too short for thorough case analysis. Also, some people find it difficult to think freely in public.

Fortunately, therefore, case study can be much more than case discussion.

3. *Case analysis.* If one's aim in studying cases is to become more productive as a Member, how can analyzing cases be helpful?

Some Specifications

The way in which people think about case reports should be realistic, methodical, comprehensive, and flexible.

Limitations

Case analysis, too, has limitations. For instance, many people don't like to work long hours in close analytical thinking, especially if they are expected to do it alone. And a solitary case analyst is often blocked by his prejudices and preconceptions. Also, no system of thinking about social situations can do much for anyone until he learns how to adapt it to his own needs. But how many people get that far with case method?

What Can Be Learned?

Perhaps none of us has learned all that he theoretically might have learned by case method. But everyone who seriously applies himself to case study of social relations can learn how to be more productive in his relationships with other people. For instance, he can make headway in:

1. Thinking and speaking clearly
2. Becoming alert and adept as a listener
3. Generalizing without being unrealistic or vague
4. Broadening his scope of view (partly by assimilating new ideas and partly by extending his concern to include values that other people speak for)
5. Developing his capacity to understand and appreciate his associates

Anyone who embarks on case method as a means toward case-mindedness is launched on a long process of self-education. Probably he'll never emerge as a finished product. But he can keep moving ahead, working toward an ideal which closely resembles the "liberally educated man," who has been described as follows:

> [He] is articulate, both in speech and writing. He has a feel for language, a respect for clarity and directness of expression. . . . He thinks rationally, logically, objectively, and knows the difference between fact and opinion. When the occasion demands, however, his thought is imaginative and creative rather than logical. He is perceptive, sensitive to form, and affected by beauty. His mind is flexible and adaptable, curious and independent. He knows a good deal about the world of nature and of man, about the culture of which he is a part, but he is never merely "well-informed." He can use what he knows, with judgment and discrimination. . . . Whether making a professional or a personal decision, he acts with maturity, balance, and perspective, which come ultimately from his knowledge of other persons, other problems, other times and places. He has convictions, which are reasoned, although he cannot always prove them. He is tolerant about the beliefs of others because he respects sincerity and is not afraid of ideas. . . . Above all, the liberally educated man is never a type. He is always a unique person, vivid in his distinction from other similarly educated persons, while sharing with them the traits we have mentioned.[2]

[2] *Committee Report: General Education in School and College*, pp. 19–20.

This kind of liberal education could not be gained in any field of learning by a person who worked entirely alone. And especially in learning about social relations, experience gained in group work can be vitally important. Nevertheless, the way a person thinks about cases (his method of analysis) makes a difference in what he can learn. This hypothesis forms the basis of the next three chapters.

PART TWO

A METHOD FOR ANALYZING SOCIAL SITUATIONS

CHAPTER 3

TYPICAL FACTORS IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS

> The most important factor in the training of good mental habits consists in acquiring the attitude of suspended conclusion, and in mastering the various methods of searching for new materials to corroborate or to refute the first suggestions that occur. To maintain the state of doubt and to carry on systematic and protracted inquiry—these are the essentials of thinking.[1]

A seasoned case analyst does not act hastily in making up his mind. He has mastered a method which teaches him how to make good use of clues on his way toward conclusions. He *looks into* each case with a wide range of questions, knowing that he needs to *look for* many different kinds of facts. To analyze a case "by systematic inquiry" is to take it apart (by asking questions) and then put it together again (synthesis)—as a meaningful whole.

A THREE–PART APPROACH

Our system for exploring and analyzing social situations consists in (1) looking into typical factors, (2) taking and combining different angles of view, and (3) using some ideas and practices of General Semantics. (In this chapter we talk chiefly about typical factors.)

A practical question about any method is: How does it work? And a practical way to answer that question is to apply the method. Let's give the first part of this method a trial run, starting with the only case reported, so far, in this book. By digging into even such a small-scale situation as that of *A Displaced Seminar Group*, you can get some impression

[1] John Dewey, *How We Think*, p. 13.

of how this system of analysis works, when used as a means of looking below the surface of a case report. (If you'd like to refresh your memory of Case I, turn back to the beginning of Chapter 1.)

Even in such a short and scanty sketch as Case I, one can get glimpses of (1) human nature, (2) the technical factor (method), and (3) space-time relationships.

Which Factor Shall We Begin With?

A good way for anyone to start, in exploring any situation, is to look into something that interests him. Unfortunately, we can't know what specially interests you. But it seems reasonable to assume that you're interested in human nature. If we take a close look at what was reportedly said and done by participants in Case I, what glimpses of human nature can we find? For example, can we pick up any clues as to the way in which *personality traits* can affect a situation? Can we find any indications as to how *membership in some group* may have influenced an individual and, through his behavior, made a difference in the turn of events? Even a report as short as Case I offers more clues into human nature than are suggested by the following questions. But they may suffice, as samples.

Typical Factors Illustrated in Case I

I. *Human nature*
  A. *Individual personality*
    1. What can be glimpsed through the following words of the FIRST STUDENT?
      a. "Hey! Those are mine!" (referring to the articles which the teacher was offering to the carpenters).
      b. "But what about all the ladders. . . . I should think *that* would have told you something!"
        (1) Is your analysis influenced by the fact that these remarks were made by a student to a teacher in the U.S.A.?
    2. What other comments and what actions by that student might be cited to support your interpretation of items *a* and *b* above?
    3. What can be inferred about the character of the SECOND STUDENT by analyzing his share in the dialogue with the teacher about the notice on the door?
      a. What difference does it make, in your interpretation, if you take into account the report *about* him, that he was usually rather a silent member of the group?
    4. What attitude is suggested by the comment of the THIRD STUDENT: "I understand how you felt. . . ."?

B. *Human responses that may have been influenced by group relationships*
   1. What behavior—if any—of students in this case seems to you typical of American undergraduates today? (In addition to what was said and done, you might like to consider what was *not* said—for example, about the notice on the door when the teacher came in—and what was not done by the majority, after the teacher suggested that they write a case report.)
   2. What words and actions by the carpenters suggest that their attitude toward their work was different from the teacher's attitude toward his work?
      a. If these carpenters had been self-employed, or working on incentive, would you expect them to react differently when told that they couldn't work as planned?

II. *Two aspects of the technical factor*
   A. *Techniques of teaching*
      1. In what ways, and at what stages in the brief time span of this case, might the teacher have been more efficient?
   B. *Techniques of communication*
      1. How would you appraise the teacher's effectiveness in communicating with the maintenance men? (For example, what essential stage in the communication cycle did he cut short when the men first came into the room?)
      2. Why do you agree (or disagree) with the opinion reached by the seminar group that tacking a notice on the outside of a door is a relatively inefficient way to inform people of an administrative decision?
         a. In answering such a question, how significant does it seem that the disadvantages which actually followed (in this case) are obvious by hindsight, but might not easily be foreseen by a person whose place of work is a registrar's office? (For instance, when people have blamed you for making mistakes, hasn't it ever seemed to you that they could think more realistically if they tried to see what the situation had looked like—from your angle?)

III. *Space-time relationships*
   A. *Preferred location, within a work space*
      1. Were you surprised to learn that the FIRST STUDENT seated himself up in front, as soon as this opportunity presented itself? Or does that action seem in character for him? Why?
      2. Do you know of other cases (perhaps in a business or industrial setting) where a similar preference has been shown in connection with the location of a desk or an office?

B. *On suitability of location for a given method of work*

1. When people are using discussion as a method of getting results together, what spatial arrangements promote efficiency, and what arrangements hinder it? [2]
2. How might one explain the fact that in this case most of the discussion appears to have taken place under conditions that were *spatially unfavorable* for it?

C. *Distance as a factor in a social situation*

An official in the registrar's office (responsible for rearranging room assignments at the time of this case) might ask questions like the following:

1. What is the nearest suitable room to which each of these classes can be moved?
2. If we must ask people to shift into another building, temporarily, what can we do to prevent any unnecessary expenditure of their time?

D. *Timing of work to be done by union members*

1. How might one account for the administrative decision to have carpentry work done during the week and in the daytime, even at the cost of displacing students and teachers?

E. *Individual differences in pace*

1. At what point was a fast pace, by some participant, associated with a difficulty for another participant?
2. Have you ever experienced difficulties in working with someone whose natural pace was much faster or slower than yours?

F. *Duration-as-experienced*

It's not necessary to be an old hand at case analysis in order to appreciate that a given length of time—as measured by a clock or a calendar—is often quite different from one's impression of that time span.

1. What indication do you find in this case that the teacher considered the two hours scheduled for class work a painfully short period of time?
2. What comment from a student suggests that one part of these two hours struck him as unnecessarily and unprofitably prolonged?

[2] Perhaps you have never had occasion to think about the effect of seating arrangements on informal, face-to-face communication. But anyone who has tried to encourage free discussion, when he was on a raised platform and his fellow members were lined up in front of him in rows of chairs, has been in a position to notice the difficulties occasioned by that type of seating arrangement. For instance, when everyone is seated in rows that face the leader, members must turn sideways in order to see each other, or even turn right around in their chairs. And as they do so, they inevitably turn their backs on other people.

G. *Process: in accomplishment, and in personality*

1. How does "process" need to be considered in planning and directing a discussion? [3]
2. Do you find in this case any illustration of the following idea: When people interact, they do so in a spiral of response? [4]

H. *Stage: in experience and of maturity*

(Before getting into this question, we'll introduce a little more information about the FIRST STUDENT. Early in the course, he was labeled the "class pest." So far as we know, that epithet wasn't used to his face. But it was used in talking about him, and that attitude toward him determined many reactions by other students during the course. From the teacher's angle, the class pest won his spurs when he remarked, near the end of the first meeting: "Did you know you said 'See what I mean' eleven times? I actually counted.")

1. Judging by what is reported about the FIRST STUDENT (alias the class pest), at what stage of emotional maturity do you think he was at that time?
2. Have you known people who displayed a similar cockiness and egocentricity, when they were young, but who became more sensitive—socially—as they grew older?

I. *What about the sequence of events and behavior?*

Among the aspects of the time dimension that were illustrated in Case I, we didn't mention *sequence*, because in that situation, it doesn't seem a particularly productive line of inquiry. The following brief example may serve to illustrate the importance, in some cases, of knowing about the sequence of events and behavior.

THE CASE OF THE OUTRAGED SALES MANAGER [5]

In a motor company, an indignant Sales Manager discharged a mechanic. The events which led up to the discharge were briefly these.

[3] If thinking about discussion hasn't been part of your business, you might like to consider our answer to that question. As suggested in Chap. 2, productive discussion moves through a process which (at best) includes the following stages: (1) getting everyone's attention centered on the same topic; (2) bringing out differences in ideas, experiences, and attitudes; (3) trying to establish the relevance and the weight of what each person is speaking for; and (4) working toward a composite view that represents the best thinking that can be done after sifting all that has been said.

[4] We take this idea from Mary P. Follett. She developed it, using the term "circular response," in chaps. 3 and 4 of *Creative Experience*. In brief, her idea was that no one responds *as* a fixed entity, or *to* another fixed entity. When A and B interact, A responds to B's response-to-him-and-to-the-situation in which they find themselves. This interplay of responses brings about changes in A and B, and also in the situation.

[5] For a much more complete account, see Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., *Labor Relations Reports*, 20 LA-305.

The mechanic, hoping to earn a sales bonus, had told one of the salesmen that his brother-in-law was "in the market for two trucks." Owing to various complications, the mechanic was informed—*before* the sale was completed—that he would receive no bonus because he hadn't followed the procedure required to earn it. According to the Manager's description of this interview, the mechanic "became angry, then surly and antagonistic."

Half an hour after this interview, the Manager learned that the mechanic's brother-in-law was going to buy the trucks from a competitor. The next day the Manager called the mechanic into his office, "charged him with disloyalty to the organization," and gave him his notice.

The mechanic protested his discharge, and (a few weeks later) the case was taken to arbitration. At the hearing, the Manager gave as grounds for the discharge "disrespect" and "disloyalty."

The arbitrator found that the charge of "disloyalty" was insufficiently supported by the evidence. In his discussion, he noted that the mechanic's "brother-in-law is the unknown variable." The Manager did not actually *know* why the brother-in-law switched to a competing company. He therefore could not prove that the mechanic had "diverted the sale."

The charge of "disrespect" was substantiated. But had it been a ground for discharge? During the hearing, the Manager described "the surly attitude and resentment expressed by" the mechanic, claiming that it amounted to insubordination. And the mechanic admitted that he had been "pretty outspoken." But the arbitrator's questions brought out the information that no charge of insubordination had been made *during* the interview. In fact, it had not been mentioned until *after* the mechanic had been discharged. The arbitrator, therefore, reasoned that the mechanic's "surliness and defiance" would not have been considered a ground for discharge "had there not been *subsequent developments* [emphasis supplied] such as the purchase of the trucks from [a competitor] . . . an incident that might have been very provoking to the high-level employee."

Since the charges could not be substantiated, the arbitrator ruled that the mechanic should be reinstated, with back pay.

Time for a Change?

Are you getting tired of being on the receiving end of so many questions? If so, here's a brief respite.

CASE II. A NEW VOLUNTEER

Foreword

Our reasons for using this case here are these:

First, the typical factors show up in it clearly, perhaps because their effects and interrelationships seemed significant to the participant who wrote the case report. For example, the report includes impressions as to the effects of space-time conditions on participants. It also indicates how personality traits and organizational roles can affect the responses of par-

ticipants to space-time conditions. And the reporter tried to show that human needs and personality traits, as well as space-time conditions, made a difference in what was attempted, and achieved, in meeting technical requirements.

In this way, the report on *A New Volunteer* may serve to suggest that these factors are worth analyzing as *integrally related elements.* This kind of relationship is closer than is indicated by saying that a work situation consists of human *and* technical factors, *and* conditions of space *and* time. The connective "and" suggests that the elements are merely additive. But in any social situation, these factors are as inseparable as the component parts of a musical composition. A symphony cannot properly be described as consisting of melody *and* harmony *and* orchestration. It is orchestrated melody, expressed in rhythmical harmony (which usually includes some dissonances). Similarly, in a work situation human nature (expressed in the behavior of individuals and of groups, and modified by organizational structures and procedures, as well as by customs and social relationships) operates through work methods (and in a variety of other techniques intended to implement human purposes) that are more or less efficiently planned, placed, and adapted, in a space-time continuum.

Second, the following report may serve to illustrate how a system of case analysis can be useful in a current situation. As it happens, in the case *A New Volunteer* the new aide was familiar with our analytical system. And she used all three parts of it as a way to orient herself (in a situation that was new to her) and to answer—in action—certain questions that seemed to be put to her by that situation.

In reading her report, therefore, you can get a brief preview of material to be presented in the next two chapters, ideas about *different angles of view* and about *semantic analysis* as one way to get clues as to what people mean.

And now for the case.

Stage 1. Getting into a Work Situation: Recruitment

A woman (with many other demands on her time) wanted to do something regularly for the community. Having worked for the Red Cross before, as a staff aide, she knew that the standard schedule was only three hours on one day a week. This much time she felt she could spare.

The retiring chairman of staff aides in the local chapter suggested that since the local blood program was being expanded, she might like to help with that. The vice-chairman of this project, Nancy Goodman, lived around the corner from this potential volunteer and was an intimate friend. Being both able and pleasant, she would be congenial to work with. Perhaps the work on the blood program could even be done at home, thus saving travel time.

The vice-chairman was delighted to have another volunteer, and said she would think about the best way to use a new aide. When these two women met

again, a few days later, the vice-chairman reported that the most acute need was at the blood bank in a local hospital. The intensive recruitment of new donors was making more work than could easily be handled by the staff currently working at the hospital blood bank.

Stage 2. Orientation

A Casual Start (in the neighborhood)

The next day, while walking with her dogs, the new volunteer met the vice-chairman again.

NANCY (the vice-chairman): Oh, by the way, could you find time to take the staff aide course?

VOLUNTEER: Heavens no! What course? You mean one of those fifty-hour jobs?

NANCY: Oh, no, it's just for orientation. It's only a two-hour lecture. They're giving one for all the new staff aides, down at the Red Cross, next week on Thursday evening. And Mary (the executive secretary of the local Red Cross chapter) really does like people to take it. She can't count the hours if they don't.

VOLUNTEER: What on earth do you mean—"Count the hours"?

NANCY: Well, it's a Red Cross regulation. Unless staff aides take the orientation course, the chapter can't be credited with their hours.

VOLUNTEER: O.K. Put me down for the course. And wouldn't it be a good idea for me to go to the hospital and talk to Mrs. Robertson (the nurse in charge of the blood donor station)? Do you think she could see me Monday?

At the Hospital: Explanation of Technical Duties

On Monday morning, Mrs. Robertson (who would be the new volunteer's immediate supervisor) explained a staff aide's share in the work, and showed her the first part of the routine. (The work assignment was purely clerical and consisted in transferring standard information to permanent records.) The hours of work were also arranged. The regular appointment days were Tuesday evenings and Wednesday afternoons. The work on records should be done each week, as soon as possible after those days. Two hours on Wednesday, and again on Friday, would be the minimum time needed to keep up with this work. The new volunteer undertook the four-hour weekly assignment, but explained that a longstanding engagement would interfere with it on one day two weeks hence. Mrs. Robertson accepted this explanation pleasantly, adding: "We can always manage when we know ahead. But I *do* like to know if anyone is not coming."

Orientation Course at Red Cross Headquarters

The orientation course for newly recruited staff aides consisted of a two-hour lecture, with opportunities for questions. In the first hour the executive secretary of the local chapter covered facts about organizational relationships (including an explanation of the national organization chart) and specific responsibilities

of staff aides. Among these latter items of information, the following seemed especially noteworthy.

Staff aides should, at all times, meet professional standards of work and behavior. A volunteer should in no way fall below the level of what is expected from a paid worker. Every Red Cross worker is a representative of the Red Cross.

If any staff aide cannot report for work as scheduled, she should notify the chairman of staff aides as far in advance as possible (so that a replacement can be made). The staff aide who had just been assigned to work at the hospital asked if this report regulation also applied to her. It did. (It was somewhat disorienting to learn that, in at least one important respect, Mrs. Robertson was not her boss, after all.)

Induction

The new volunteer started work on a Wednesday. Her first impressions were somewhat confused, but on the whole highly favorable. Working conditions were rather bad for a typist. The glare from the main hospital entrance—directly opposite her work station—was tiring for the eyes. There was constant noise. It was stuffy. The chair at the typewriter was the wrong height for her, and its worn legs snagged her nylons. But for only four hours a week these circumstances were unimportant. What made more difference was that the people who worked in the blood bank seemed unusually pleasant, especially Mrs. Robertson, the nurse in charge. Mrs. Robertson showed herself to be exceptionally calm and patient as a teacher. Evidently she was experienced in breaking in volunteers. She expected mistakes, in the beginning. And it was reassuring to find that her system for double-checking all clerical work seemed practically foolproof.

Stage 3. On the Job

Effects of Spatial Arrangements

It soon became apparent that the location of the staff aide's work place was a vital factor in determining the nature of her job. This location inevitably made her a participant in current events, instead of just a clerical worker.

Her regular place of work was at the typewriter and at the desk next to it. This work place was (1) fronting the main entrance to the hospital; (2) about 5 feet inside the entrance [6] to the Blood Service Center; and (3) in a narrow vestibule between (*a*) the donor's waiting room, (*b*) the so-called bleeding room where donors gave blood, (*c*) the laboratory-canteen (where blood types and Rh factors were determined and where light refreshments were prepared for donors), (*d*) a room (with no door) where doctors dictated case histories

[6] This entrance had two swinging doors which were usually open to relieve the stuffiness of the office. When she was typing, the staff aide was facing everyone who came into the hospital or into the Blood Service Center. (This name for the work place is used here instead of the cumbersome term "Blood Bank–Blood Donor Station," since *service*, in giving and taking blood, was the common denominator.)

on hospital patients, and (*e*) another room where blood transfusions were given to outpatients. (This room was also used for donors to rest in, on the rare occasions when one of them had a reaction.)

This central location of the staff aide's work place made it difficult to concentrate on a new technical assignment. And it introduced a number of unexpected demands on her time. Whenever a new claim appeared, she had to decide: "Should this unassigned responsibility be ignored, in order to get on with my assigned duties? Or is this responsibility so important that it warrants interrupting a staff aide's technical work?" (An old-timer can usually answer such a question without any difficulty. But how is a novice to decide what to do, without knowing how assigned duties dovetail with other work in the section, or what the immediate supervisor and other workers expect?)

The new staff aide's share in unassigned responsibilities is the common denominator in the following questions:

1. What responsibilities, if any, does a "recording" [7] staff aide have toward people in the hospital who are not members of her work group? For instance, patients and visitors who came into the hospital often mistook the recording staff aide for a receptionist. (This mistake was the more easily made since her work period included lunch and supper hours when sometimes, for a few minutes, the nearby information desk was not manned. And until some weeks later, there was no sign outside the Blood Service Center to identify it.) At first she had not even been briefed to answer the stock questions that people ask when they come into a hospital. Should she confess her ignorance, and go back to her typing? Or should she go with the questioner to get the information? By doing so, she could be helpful, and also get oriented in the hospital. But was such orientation any part of her business? If she allowed herself to be interrupted often for such errands, she would not be able to finish her assigned work.

Doctors and other hospital personnel, who passed by on their way in and out of the hospital, also stopped now and then for a friendly chat. Could she decently reject the role in which they cast her, and refuse to pass the time of day? Or is sociability inappropriate for a part-time clerk whose working hours are too short to meet all the technical requirements of her regularly assigned job? (At the end of the second week's work, it seemed clear that even four extra hours from a recording staff aide would not be enough to keep up with the rising tide of new donors. Mrs. Robertson said that what she needed was extra secretarial help for at least two hours a day, five days a week.)

When such questions come up in a new worker's mind (because her immediate supervisor has not spelled out the answers in advance), should they be put to the boss, in words? Or is it preferable to risk making mistakes, while learning to read the unspoken answers indicated by the boss's behavior? This query brings up the related point: How many questions can an aide ask without becoming more of a nuisance than an aid?

2. What are a recording staff aide's responsibilities to donors who come in

[7] The descriptive terms "recording" and "receiving" are used to identify for the reader the two different functions carried out by staff aides at the Blood Service Center. But no such terms were used in the center, either orally to clarify instructions for a beginner or, apparently, even in planning the work.

while she is at work? As this recruit first understood it, her job was solely to feed the organizational memory of the Red Cross and of the hospital with standard information about people who had come to give blood.

But sometimes when a "walk-in" [8] appeared, only the new staff aide was there to receive him. This space-time relationship automatically made her a receptionist, at least in the donor's eyes. But she had been given no instructions for dealing with donors in the flesh. Therefore, when first confronted with a walk-in, she did not even see him, far less recognize him as a person toward whom she had an overriding responsibility. Nor did she realize, at that time, that her treatment of the walk-in might be a critical factor in helping him to become a regular donor.

At the moment, she was trying (with a frown) to decipher an almost illegible entry, the signature of a donor who had given blood the day before. Suddenly she became aware that someone was standing in front of her, waiting. As soon as she gave him a chance to speak, he gave her a new angle on what her job might be. Since it was not one of the regular appointment periods, neither the laboratory technician nor the Red Cross nurse's aide was there. Mrs. Robertson (the nurse in charge) was in a ward giving a blood transfusion.

Should she temporarily take upon herself the responsibility of starting a donor on the routine procedure? Or would it be better to take him into the waiting room, and tell him that the nurse would be back soon? But if he was in a hurry, would this latter course of action be good public relations? Yet, if she tried to act as a receiving staff aide, she would certainly make mistakes. During her few hours at work, she had observed only that part of the receiving procedure which had forced itself on her attention.

3. What about the telephone? Quite often, interruptions to the staff aide's assigned work came from the telephone. When it kept ringing insistently, was she supposed to answer it? No one had told her to do so. But perhaps this job requirement was supposed to be self-evident? On the other hand, she almost certainly would not know how to answer whatever questions were asked. And this proved to be the case.

Later, she found out that her duties included answering the telephone when other personnel were out, or busy. And by that time she had learned something about how to deal with run-of-the-mill questions. But what was the appropriate thing to say on picking up the receiver? Four out of the five other people who answered the telephone said: "Blood bank." But Mrs. Robertson, the nurse in charge, said: "Mrs. Robertson's office." Query: When a Red Cross staff aide has signed up to work in a blood bank and donor station, how does she identify the place where the telephone rings? Should her answer depend on whether or not Mrs. Robertson is within earshot?

4. How much time is there for sociability with coworkers? Being in the narrow vestibule gave the recording staff aide many contacts with other workers in the Blood Service Center. If they were in a hurry, and her typewriter carriage was way over to the right, she learned to watch out for their passing. The only delicate question for decision arose when they were at leisure.

[8] In the vernacular of the Blood Service Center at that time, a donor who appeared without an appointment was "just a walk-in."

Effects of the Time Factor

At first, the question of spending any time in sociability with fellow workers was not even formulated in her mind. The technical job was all-absorbing. It required learning four recording systems (all somewhat different). And this felt like enough to cope with. It seemed a good idea to shut herself into the world made up of the typewriter and the standard information, and to shut out the distracting noise of conversation. But several times on her first day she was jolted out of this self-imposed isolation by becoming aware of a silence at her elbow. Once she was being offered a coke. Another time a corsage was being held up for her admiration. Later, when she became more accepted, other workers sometimes wanted to tell her their grievances. But, of course, listening to a grievance takes time. On the other hand, even seeming unsociable is never a good idea, in theory. Yet, on a busy day, is it suitable—organizationally—to spend much time being friendly to fellow workers?

In theory, the answer is easy. But the answer is different according to what view you take. From a strictly organizational view, sociability is out—during scheduled work hours. But suppose you take the view that even work relationships are human relationships, and that work goes better when people feel and act like fellow Members? From that angle, some sociability makes sense. If you want to be a Member of any group, you have to act on the following principle: Objective demands *on* other Members, and subjective demands *by* other Members, are to some extent *claims on you*. However, if this principle merely represents the viewpoint of a subordinate, is it an adequate guide for his behavior? How much responsibility has a worker for finding out about organizational policy?

Membership

A question that occurred to the new volunteer was this: Can a clerical worker become a full-fledged member of a nursing group?

Students of group dynamics agree that most workers put the claims of social membership (acceptance in the work group) far ahead of technical demands connected with the work for which they are paid.[9]

The new staff aide soon saw that having recently come into the section from outside was probably the least significant factor in making her an outsider. At worst, that kind of outsideness would entail only a temporary probation period. But obviously, a more serious obstacle to full acceptance was the intermittent nature and the shortness of her weekly work schedule. (Possibly the most serious barrier was her disinclination to chat. However, this work group was more task-centered than most groups of factory workers. Two reasons for this difference probably were their organizational status and the nature of their work.) In this group, part-timeness was a matter of degree. At that time, no member ex-

[9] For an interesting study on this question, see A. Zaleznik, C. R. Christensen, and F. J. Roethlisberger, *The Motivation, Productivity, and Satisfaction of Workers*, especially chaps. 2, 9–11. In our opinion, this study has exceptional merit because the hypotheses and predictions about behavior by workers are clearly stated and are later reappraised in the light of case material obtained by two of the authors during a year spent in a factory.

cept Mrs. Robertson worked a forty-hour week for the blood program. But the other registered nurse and the nurse's aide were on duty throughout the hours that were specially scheduled for donor appointments. And if only one person signs out in the middle of a busy work period, he sets himself apart from those who keep working. This was made plain to the recording staff aide one Wednesday when she had voluntarily put in overtime to finish work on a batch of cards. Only the nurse's aide was available to speak to:

STAFF AIDE: Will you please tell Mrs. Robertson that I finished the cards? But I didn't have time to do the report sheet. I really have to go now.

NURSE'S AIDE: Oh, that'll be all right. Every little bit helps.

Apparently a more serious count against a recording staff aide is the nature of her job assignment. A layman whose assigned role is nothing but clerical work (in relation to past donors) is not easily accepted as a teammate by nurses (whether regular nurses or Red Cross nurses' aides) who work directly with these "patients." (At that time, the nurses usually referred to all donors as patients.) At first, the recording staff aide got rattled if nurses talked to her when she had more work than she thought she could finish. But on days when she was less busy, she realized that none of them did talk to her if anyone else was available. When they had time on their hands, they sat around in the laboratory and chatted over coffee. At noon and at suppertime they always offered coffee to each other. Why did no one offer her any?

Membership as Affected by the Time Factor

The question about coffee was answered during the first evening on which the staff aide volunteered for extra work. On Tuesdays, the Blood Service Center stayed open till eight o'clock. As that was the only period for evening appointments, the nurses were usually busy and often rushed. They were supposed always to have a receiving staff aide to help take in donors. The two registered nurses were fully occupied in getting case histories, or in "bleeding" donors, and the Red Cross nurse's aide was kept busy with other jobs for these patients.

Two months after the recording staff aide had started work, she learned that the receiving staff aide who had been coming in from five to seven on Tuesdays had gone away. As there was no replacement for the following Tuesday, she offered to fill in, "if a green worker would be any help." To her surprise, Mrs. Robertson seemed both pleased and touched by the offer.

When she arrived, the atmosphere in the Blood Service Center was unmistakably different, though the only tangible evidence of the difference in feeling toward her was that she was immediately offered a cup of coffee. She refused it, with thanks, because she had just stoked up for the work shift by having a hearty tea. In mentioning this fact, she thought she was just explaining that she didn't need any refreshment. She quite overlooked the symbolic significance of the friendly gesture, and of her refusal to accept it.

As it happened, the first appointment was canceled, and the next donors were late. During this half hour it gradually grew darker outside so that the brightly lit Blood Service Center stood out as a center of activity. The feeling of belonging to a small work community was intensified as hospital personnel from other departments went by, calling out: "Good night."

During this interval, the new aide, who was now to help receive donors for the first time, expected to get some instruction. To her surprise none was forthcoming. Evidently the assumption was: An aide who has been here for weeks knows what to do. When this aide asked about her receiving duties three instructions were given. Other bits of information were picked up during the ensuing weeks, several of them as a consequence of noticing that she had omitted to do something that needed to be done.

When donors began to come in, the receiving aide had little time for talking, except with them. But the new feeling of friendliness continued as she passed the donors along to the nurses. On the dot of seven, Mrs. Robertson came out of the bleeding room and said: "You'd better run along now, honey, you must be starved. You've been a great help. Thank you ever so much for coming."

Such warmth of expression startled the staff aide. Her job that evening had been easier and more interesting than on any previous day. And having had a hearty tea, she was not hungry (as she often was on the eleven to one o'clock schedule, if work kept her after one o'clock).

She was less agreeably surprised the next day when she found that the warmth of the evening had cooled overnight. Apparently, she was now back in her role as a mere clerical worker. She was again an outsider, and nobody offered her coffee. (The suitability of coffee drinking to the role of a receiving staff aide was underlined by the fact that on Tuesday evenings she was always offered coffee. But not until three months later was the offer made on a Wednesday or a Friday afternoon.)

Job Jargon and Opportunities for Learning

In the Blood Service Center, as in other places of work, a newcomer's experience includes learning the special language (or job jargon). Many terms that seemed strange to the staff aide at first were medical. But others sounded strange because they reflected a way of thinking that struck her as being out of context. Obviously it would be indiscreet for a newcomer to raise questions about the vernacular. Any such inquiry might imply criticism of old-timers. But if some of the accepted terminology seems questionable, what is a novice to do about it? Until he adopts the local idiom, he talks like a foreigner. And this apparent ignorance of the native language delays his acceptance as a citizen in that work community. Should he then buy acceptance at the price of parroting colloquialisms (perhaps gradually slipping into the habits of thinking that go with the words)?

For instance, during the hours when the work place was a blood donor station, the terms blood bank and patient sounded odd to the new staff aide. Might they not sound equally odd to donors? For example, when a donor telephones to make an appointment, he is not calling a blood *bank*. And when he comes in to *give* blood, he is rarely a patient.[10] Moreover, if he walks in, without an appointment, is it appropriate *even to think of him* as "just a walk-in"? Natu-

[10] The difficulty of clear thinking is increased for nurses in a Blood Service Center because *some donors are patients*. For example, if a person has polycythemia, part of his treatment may be to have blood taken every few weeks.

rally, to busy workers, an unexpected arrival is an inconvenience. Is it not, therefore, all the more important to remember that he is not a beneficiary of service (like an outpatient in a clinic)? Instead, he is bringing the gift of blood without which the bank cannot continue to operate. Higher authorities in the blood program at that time felt acutely that the hardest job in the whole enterprise was to recruit enough donors. In their eyes, a donor who just walked in, spontaneously, looked like an unearned bonus. From their point of view, the key question would be: How can this spontaneous giver be turned into a regular donor? One way to start answering that question would be to receive him with special appreciation.

When such questions occur to a new worker, they might be put to constructive use if there were some inoffensive way of bringing them to the attention of old-timers. But the role of a beginner doesn't lend itself to any such procedure. His business is to learn. And his chief personal concern is probably to get himself accepted. For both purposes, his best bet may be to listen and to imitate. But as he continues this passive and uncritical role, his vivid first impressions rapidly fade. Soon he is talking and thinking like an old-timer. When it's his turn to help induct a new worker, he has probably forgotten the unanswered questions that occurred to him when he was a novice. Insofar as his first impressions were mistaken, he probably corrected them in the course of time. But if he actually noticed something that needed to be corrected, his unreported experience is likely to have been largely wasted.

A New View of the Job

The experience of working alternately on the day shift and in the evening was an eye opener for the new staff aide, in more ways than one. She learned something about work teams when the second Tuesday evening produced a new answer to the small but not insignificant question: "Where do I hang my coat?" On the first day of work (a Wednesday) she had been told to use one of the three hooks allocated to donors. But on the first Tuesday (the evening appointment period) the space on those hooks was soon overcrowded. The following Tuesday the receiving aide asked: "Isn't there somewhere I could put my coat and purse so they wouldn't be in the donors' way?" The answer was: "Why don't you put them where we put ours? I'll show you."

The double function of staff aides also began to appear more clearly. When one worker does both parts of this job, it becomes obvious that the work covers two main functions, receiving and recording. These functions naturally fall into two consecutive and related phases, the first one beginning when a donor walks in. The staff aide who is assigned to receive him can make him feel welcome (and help to relieve his nervousness, if he has not given blood before). There is always opportunity for small talk while she shows him where to hang his hat and coat, and gets his signature on a slip that will become part of the permanent record. If he has not given blood in this station before, she needs to get answers to a standard set of questions. At the hospital, the procedure was to jot down the answers in pencil, on a slip that was then clipped to the card. (Since none of the data is medical, it was surprising to have a nurse ask several times, on

the first few evenings: "Did you get his case history?" Apparently that terminology was another carry-over from the context of admitting a patient to a hospital.)

In pauses between the arrival of donors, the fact that the bleeding room was only a few feet from the staff aide's work place made it possible to get on with the next phase of the clerical job. The cards of donors who had just given blood could be picked up, and the penciled information (from the case history slip) could be typed on the attached permanent card. In a busy appointment period, a receiving staff aide has little time for typing if she does her share in receiving donors, and in helping to pass the time for any who wait near her desk. But even on that first evening there was opportunity to realize that it is not difficult to work from your own penciled scrawl of data that you already know about. (It is harder and slower to decipher someone else's hasty writing of information that is presented to you through that medium for the first time.)

The next day (as she finished recording the data on donors who had come in the evening before) the standard data had a new interest. Now, for the first time, the information was related to a person who was real to her. Ivan Moskiewicz was the jolly fat man whose teeth didn't fit well, but whose good nature triumphed over that handicap. Apparently he didn't even feel annoyed when he had to repeat almost everything that he said. And he seemed perfectly contented during the twenty minutes that he had to wait his turn. Similarly, the address, telephone number, date of birth, occupation, etc., of Ave Maria O'Reilly brought to mind the girl who looked nervous enough to run away. But she stuck it out because she wanted to give blood for her friend who had suffered an industrial accident the other day, "right there in the shop."

As such vivid images flitted through the mind of the aide who was recording data on ensuing Wednesday afternoons, they did not seem to slow her down. On the contrary, because she already knew about the facts, she was able to get through more work than before. The added job interest and the easier assignment made it seem surprising that it was not a standard procedure to have a staff aide begin at the beginning of the job cycle—with receiving—and then go on to record that data. Not only was the work easier when done in that sequence, but there was also more opportunity for a self-check and for making improvements in the work routine. For instance, when you look at your own untidy handwriting, it becomes obvious that people who write in a hurry ought to print or type. A mistake that was less easy to correct showed up when she realized that on several slips a nurse had to fill in the space at the bottom of the slip that should have been completed by the receiving staff aide. Since nobody mentioned this omission, the staff aide must watch out for it herself next week.

Naturally, only a beginner feels the confusing effect of starting with what turns out to be the second part of a job. And no one but a learner can guess how many unnecessary mistakes she makes, at first, when her efforts to do the second part of the job correctly are repeatedly interrupted (as on Wednesday afternoons) by demands related to the first part (when new donors come in). After a worker gets used to a job, he usually forgets early difficulties. And if a new worker "knows what's good for him" he does not voice the questions that

nag at his mind, such as: "Does it *have* to be this way?" and "Since there seems to be no functional reason for this practice, can I do anything to get it changed?"

As time went on, the new staff aide's impression that one does not make suggestions to the boss was confirmed by the senior nurse's aide. Apparently in hospitals (even more than in most places) suggestions from workers, new or old, are unlikely to be received favorably by those in a position to make changes. The senior nurse's aide had learned that lesson during years of experience with nursing supervisors, long before this Blood Service Center had been set up. One day, the new staff aide asked her opinion about a possible improvement in procedure. Without answering the specific question that had been put to her, the senior aide replied solemnly: "You want to be careful what you say around here. You're liable to step on someone's toes."

Generalizing from This Case

1. *On induction*
   a. Have you ever had firsthand experience in a situation where induction was entirely adequate? If so, what were the distinctive features of that induction program?
2. *Supervising volunteer workers*
   a. What important differences can a supervisor expect to find, in attitudes and work habits, between part-time volunteers and full-time, paid workers?
3. *On function and Membership*
   a. Have you heard about, or been involved in, other situations where employees assigned to "nonproductive" work had difficulty in winning acceptance as full-fledged members of a work group?
4. *On organization policy*
   a. Do you agree with both parts of the following statement: "It is certainly true of a volunteer organization that it is effective only when policies are based on the consent of those who have to carry them out. This is the real difference between supervising the work of a volunteer and a paid worker." [11]
   b. Do you know any business or industrial concern in which organization policies are fully effective, yet *not* agreed to by the members who "have to carry them out"?
5. *Questions on case method*
   a. What advantages and risks might have been anticipated if the staff of the Blood Service Center had been invited to discuss the information reported as facts in Case II?
   b. What advantages and disadvantages might there be in having an informal discussion between all staff members in the Blood Service

[11] Paula Menkin, "Supervising the Volunteer," *Adult Leadership*, vol. 4, no. 4, p. 27, October, 1955.

Center, in order to plan for possible changes in practice and procedure, and then having the sense of the meeting reported up the line to the head of the blood program?

6. *Suggestions for semantic analysis*

a. The foregoing report includes several different kinds of statements. Can you find samples of *straight reporting* (plain statements about facts which could be objectively verified), *inferences, assumptions,* and *judgments?*

CHAPTER 4

"GETTING AROUND," BY ANALYZING CASES

> A "situation," therefore, consists both of things that "are so," and of things becoming what people make them.[1]

What anyone can make of a situation depends partly on what he sees in it. And what he can see depends partly on where he is (inside or outside the situation) but also on how he looks at it. Many of us take an unnecessarily limited view of social situations. Often we stay just about where we start. Analyzing cases, especially in a group, is an exercise that can help us to develop techniques for getting beyond where we happen to start, in a variety of case situations.

For instance, in relation to most cases discussed in study groups, people begin with an *outside view*. But by using his social imagination, a person may be able to get near enough, even to a relatively remote case, so that he feels *within himself* some of the emotions and purposes which impelled those participants to behave as they did. After achieving something that approximates an *inside view*, he may be able to make realistic recommendations as to what could have been done differently—in that case.

With other cases (in firsthand experience), people start as insiders. Then the force of their feelings may make it difficult for them to view the situation with sufficient detachment so that they can act in the way they would recommend for people in such a case. One way for any insider to get beyond a strictly I-view is by taking an *organizational view*.

Wherever people work together in formalized relationships, understanding the situation entails taking account of the assigned positions which make up the organizational structure, and of the functions needed to accomplish organizational objectives. An outsider who doesn't know

[1] Alfred Dwight Sheffield, "Things Learned about Thinking by Thinkers in Groups," p. 62.

who people are and what they are expected to do—organizationally—is greatly restricted in what he can understand *about* the situation. And an insider who disregards organizational facts or requirements seriously limits what he can accomplish, *in* the situation.

Those two general ideas can be illustrated by giving fragments of one case.

A BIT OF THE OIL RAG CASE

A machine operator threw an oil rag. It hit a man who was walking through the shop.

What difference does it make, in the possibility of understanding that situation, when you find out that the man who got hit was a vice-president, and the treasurer, of the company which employed the man who threw the rag?

Taking an organizational view of a situation in which one is involved can be a step toward the vantage point from which one can get a *long-range view.* And when a person becomes able to see the woods, and not just a few trees, he may find that he can successfully counteract feelings which could otherwise impel him to do something that he would regret later.

Continued and systematic analysis of cases can help people to get into the habit of taking—and synthesizing—all four of these views. In order to explain why we think so, we'll describe each of them.

AN ORGANIZATIONAL VIEW

If a student (or an arbitrator) is trying to assess the justifiability of some action in a case, he needs to know salient facts and major requirements relating to organizational structure. Similarly, when an insider is deciding what to do, he needs to think about the responsibilities and restrictions imposed by organizational roles. What might be called rule number one, for organizational behavior, is this: *In acting as a responsible Member, a person is obligated to give weight to the opportunities and obligations implied by his assigned function in the enterprise as a whole, and by his assigned position in the formal structure of relationships.* A responsible Member is not free to say or do whatever happens to come into his head. Moreover, he is obligated to respect the organizational commitments of other Members. He is committed to doing what he can (within his sphere of authority and responsibility) to help others meet their responsibilities as Members.

There's nothing unfamiliar about that general idea—as a theory. For instance, every football player and sports fan knows what is expected of a fullback by reason of his role as a team member. And people would be

shocked if he started calling signals as though he were a quarterback. In a family, an orchestra, or a club, the determinant effect of roles is similar. In business and industrial concerns, the theory is the same. But systems of modern management sometimes make the organizational structure so complex that people can't see clearly where they fit in.

However, even in such a situation, much of the organizational code remains simple and familiar. For instance, everyone knows that members of management are responsible for making rules and giving orders. Rank-and-file workers are supposed to comply with rules and to carry out orders. When there's a union in the picture, a worker has an effective (and organizationally appropriate) means of protesting any order that he regards as unreasonable or unfair. He can appeal to his shop steward. If necessary, the whole grievance procedure can be used.

Members of management, too, are supposed to regulate their behavior by an organizational code. Orders are sent down the line, and reports go up in each department. A management representative who bypasses the representative on the next level (either above or below him) is departing from approved procedure just as surely as a worker who disregards an order from his immediate supervisor.

However, meeting requirements as an organizational member is not always either simple or easy.

Complicating Factors in Modern Organizations

One set of complications is introduced when the role of staff expert is built into an organizational structure. These technical experts have two functions: doing research and advising members of line management. In theory, there is a clear distinction between giving advice and giving orders. But many cases show that this distinction can easily become blurred in practice.[2] By analyzing such cases, people can develop practical ideas about coping with common difficulties between members of staff and line.

Other complications are added when employees join a union. Those who are now members of two organizations—both functioning in the same place and at the same time—*may feel a conflict of loyalties.*[3] Management representatives face a similar difficulty. They must now adjust to a situation in which the labor agreement greatly limits their freedom to make unilateral decisions. And one of the most difficult roles is that of the first-line supervisor. Often he finds himself in the uncomfortable position of "the man in the middle." [4] He is expected to interact productively

[2] For a well-stated opinion "that 'line' and 'staff' are hardly distinguishable *as indicators of power status,*" see O. Glenn Stahl, "The Network of Authority," pp. ii–iv.

[3] See Ross Stagner, "Dual Allegiance as a Problem in Modern Society."

[4] F. J. Roethlisberger, "The Foreman: Master and Victim of Double Talk."

with his organizational superiors, with his colleagues, with staff experts, with workers, and with union officials. Sometimes the inherent difficulties of his position are aggravated because he lacks organizational information that he needs. (For example, he may not fully understand some management policy.) Or he may be unfamiliar with provisions of the current labor agreement. But in many cases it seems that the worst part of his difficulty comes from natural feelings of resentment. Often, he and his organizational superiors feel unwilling to accept the limitations imposed on their authority by the mere presence of a union. Perhaps they also reject (with their feelings) the idea that union officers have important organizational functions. In practice, this attitude may mean ignoring the representative function of a shop steward, for instance. And when shop stewards do their job (as representatives in their own organization) they may make difficulties for a foreman. The foreman's job was simpler in the good old days when no worker could challenge his orders with impunity.

That general statement can be made specific by citing another case. In order to illustrate the difference made by knowing organizational facts, we'll describe one Incident in two ways. First, we tell it merely as a story involving three individuals who differed as to what should be done. Then we'll report it as part of a case in which (1) these individuals had assigned organizational roles, and (2) the new way of doing things was part of an organization-wide plan.

THE BELL–HARRIS INCIDENT

Version A. McCrorie showed Bell the new method, and told him to use it from now on. Bell was reluctant to try it. But McCrorie insisted. When Bell continued to hesitate, McCrorie got two other men to join him in urging Bell to do as he was told. But even their combined efforts proved unsuccessful.

Finally, Bell turned to Harris (who was working nearby) and said: "I think this is dangerous. What do you think? Should I do it?"

Harris expressed sympathy with Bell's fears, adding: "If you feel it's unsafe, you don't have to do it."

At this point, McCrorie discharged *Harris.*

If presented as part of a case, the same Incident might be reported like this:

Version B. Foreman McCrorie showed Bell (one of the welders) the new method. Then he told Bell to hook the cable of the overhead crane to the rack of finished work.[5] Bell was reluctant to make the lift.[6] But Foreman McCrorie

[5] This rack held ten pieces of finished work. Each piece weighed 200 pounds and was not held together in any way. According to the old system, each piece of finished work had been transported separately by the overhead crane.

[6] The phrase "to make the lift" might be misleading for anyone who is technically familiar with this kind of work situation. *According to general usage,* it would mean that Welder Bell was asked to function as a crane operator. But insiders in that situa-

insisted that this was an order. When Bell continued to hesitate, the foreman called in the plant superintendent and the personnel director. They joined him in urging Bell to accept this work assignment. But even their combined efforts proved unsuccessful.

Finally Bell turned to Shop Steward Harris (another welder who was working nearby) and said: "I think this is dangerous. What do you think? Should I pick up the lift?"

Shop Steward Harris expressed sympathy with Bell's fears, adding: "If you feel it's unsafe, you don't have to do it."

At this point, Foreman McCrorie discharged Harris, for "usurping management authority."

All shop stewards had been instructed, by the chairman of the union's safety committee, as to their responsibilities in regard to matters of health and safety. Union officers and members of top management had agreed that if a worker felt a work assignment was unsafe, and asked his shop steward for advice, the steward should advise him as follows: "If you feel that the job is unsafe, you don't have to do it. But if you don't do the job, the company can send you home" (pending official determination of the hazard).

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Even this second version of the Incident is far too scanty to tell you much about the case as a whole.[7] But doesn't the organizational information supplied in Version B help you to get your bearings? And if you were trying to form a considered opinion as to the propriety of what Harris said, wouldn't you be interested to follow up questions like these:

1. In what role was Harris functioning when he spoke to Bell? (Was he speaking merely as a fellow worker? Or was he acting as a union representative?)

2. How did Harris get into the conversation? (Did he inject himself into it? Or did he merely respond to a request for advice?)

3. How should his advice be interpreted? (Did he tell a worker to disobey his foreman? Or did he merely remind a worker as to one of his rights as a union member?)

4. What organizational agreements, if any, could be cited to support his behavior?

5. How fully did Committeeman Harris meet his responsibilities, if he said nothing more to Bell than was reported in the preceding accounts of the Incident?

On balance, wouldn't you agree that Harris (as a shop steward and

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tion had no such semantic difficulty. For them, making the lift meant "hooking up the load by acting as a chain man." And in that particular case, the union had recently agreed that a welder's duties should include that assignment.

[7] For a more complete report, see *Labor Arbitration Reports*, Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., 1954, 21 LA 410.

committeeman) seems to have been within his rights in speaking when (and as) he did, and that he left to Bell the decision as to whether or not to make the lift? But perhaps you might also agree that Harris would have been meeting more of his responsibility if he had reminded Bell of the foreman's right to send home any worker who did not perform a work assignment because he felt it was unsafe. When a shop steward (or other union official) reminds a union member of management's rights, he may help a foreman (or other management representative) to accept the organizational role of a union representative.

What Can Be Done with Such a Case?

When an incident is studied as part of a case, it can be useful to management representatives and union officers. If analyzed as a remote case, not connected with a currently hot issue, supervisors (and personnel administrators) might clearly see that discharging Harris was hasty and ill-considered—in view of all the circumstances. (As it turned out, Harris was reinstated by an arbitrator.) And shop stewards (as well as other union officials) might recognize the possibility of meeting an organizational responsibility which Harris apparently overlooked. As a union committeeman, Harris didn't do all that had been agreed upon merely by reassuring Bell as to his rights.

Organizational Views May Differ, According to Where the Viewer Stands

Even such an apparently trivial incident also illustrates the idea that people may differ as to what is at stake, organizationally. For example, when Foreman McCrorie exercised his authority—as a management representative—he was responding to important requirements in his organization. But an outsider might think that Mr. McCrorie overlooked—or underestimated—the organizational requirements that Mr. Harris was meeting, as a union official. In viewing this incident from outside, and with the 20-20 vision of hindsight, a case analyst might think that neither Foreman McCrorie nor Shop Steward Harris took account of all the organizational facts and requirements which were part of the whole situation. Doesn't it look as though each of them concentrated on the rights and duties of members in the organization to which he gave primary allegiance?

A Serious Limitation

An organizational view can yield insight that is essential to understanding. But it is necessarily limited. And especially when taken by an outsider, it may actually be unrealistic unless it is supplemented by other insight. *To see the organizational picture is to see something that is ra-*

tional, formal, and relatively rigid. If everything worked out according to organizational theory, the information provided by organization charts and in job descriptions would tally exactly with what actually happens. But anyone with organizational experience knows that such pictures are not wholly true to life. People often forget (or deliberately disregard) organizational rules and requirements with which they are perfectly familiar. Sometimes they do so at considerable personal risk. Why? A person who takes nothing more than a formal organizational view can't answer that question.

To take an organizational view is to stress formal relationships. But the resulting picture leaves in obscurity the human motives which affect what actually happens wherever people do things together. A supervisor or a case student who takes a purely organizational view of someone's behavior may be able to clarify, and to fix, responsibility for an error. But if he feels concerned to prevent some difficulty by trying to influence behavior, he has to do more than that.

In trying to understand what is accountable for behavior that hampers productive interaction, one must look beyond what people ought to do—organizationally speaking. Abandoning the comfortable ringside seat of a mere onlooker, one must approach the center of action, the time and place where participants were actually wrestling with difficulties (objective and subjective). How did the situation look—and feel—from inside to the people who were doing the in-fighting?

AN INSIDE VIEW

Trying to get an inside view of a relatively remote situation requires (1) obtaining a close-up of objectively verifiable facts, and (2) achieving a keen, sympathetic appreciation of subjective forces which impelled people to act as they did. Of course, no one who is an outsider—in fact—can feel the special blend of vividness and mystery that is associated with immediate experience. It's one thing to piece together, into a meaningful and colorful whole, information about something that happened to other people. It's quite another thing to be borne along, partly submerged, in the stream of current events, vulnerable to immediate consequences, uncertain as to what they will be, yet in a position to take action that will change the situation. But a person who starts as an outsider can go a long way toward the kind of intimate, appreciative understanding which an insider has of his own situation.

Naturally, such understanding is easiest to achieve when it's possible to go to the scene of events, make one's own observations, interview participants, and study written material. The job is harder when it's necessary to work from another person's report. But even then, close and

sympathetic analysis of a full case report can yield a kind of understanding that is useful to students of social relations. By looking a little more closely at the case of *The Nervous Welder* we can illustrate that general statement.

What Can Be Seen at Close Range?

A casual reader of a bare Incident (such as that given in Version B, in the preceding pages) might jump to the conclusion that Bell was a coward. But a person schooled in the discipline of case method doesn't appraise any participant's behavior until after he has looked into all available information. For instance, a case student would naturally ask: Was there any (objectively verifiable) circumstance that might justify Mr. Bell's fear of making the lift in the new way? Such a question would bring out the information that the crane was known to have defective wheels. This defect could, conceivably, set up vibrations that might start the heavy pieces sliding off the rack, since by the new method they were not banded together. Does that information *prove* that the assignment was dangerous? No. Another fact of the case was that the new method had successfully been used, with this same crane, on the day shift. If there probably was no danger (except in Mr. Bell's mind), does that make his behavior insubordinate? Not in a situation where there was a mutual agreement that: "If a worker feels an assignment is unsafe, he doesn't have to do it."

In this case it's easy to see that feelings were a significant part of "facts that were so." And Mr. Bell's feelings were not the only subjective force which affected the course of events. What about Foreman McCrorie? Something can be seen, and more can reasonably be inferred, about the intentions and emotions that stirred him. For instance, why did he discharge Mr. Harris? Why didn't he discharge Mr. Bell?

Studying the case report (as given in the *Labor Arbitration Reports*) doesn't make it possible to answer the first question with certainty. But anybody could make an educated guess if he knew the history of the company in which this incident occurred, was familiar with the situation in which first-line supervisors often find themselves, and analyzed the information given in the published report.

For instance, in that company there had been a number of serious disputes between management representatives and union officials. (The case we're looking at now was one of five arbitrations written up in the *Labor Arbitration Reports* within a few years.) The possibilities for trouble, in this case, may well have been aggravated by the will-to-*mis*understand which often builds up between foremen and shop stewards during a history of management-union disputes, especially when there is a tight-

ening up of management controls. The official charge against Mr. Harris was "usurping management authority." An arbitrator found that this charge was not supported by facts. Doesn't such a finding make the words all the more significant, as indicators of feelings?

One fact (given in the Incident) suggests that management representatives may have been anticipating trouble. How else could it happen that Foreman McCrorie was able to get such prompt help from the plant superintendent and the personnel administrator? People in those positions rarely sit around waiting for a first-line supervisor's call to action. By reading between the lines of this case (admittedly a risky practice) one might infer that they were standing by according to previous arrangement. *If* it was expected that management authority might be questioned by some shop steward, it certainly made sense to have important management representatives ready to reinforce a foreman's order and, if necessary, to act as witnesses in a test case.

But even if there had been no special tension between management and the union, Mr. McCrorie was in a situation that might well make a foreman feel edgy. He was responsible for introducing a change in work method. And experienced foremen know that such changes are likely to prove troublesome. Workers tend to resent changes. And when workers have union representation, their feelings can be expressed in official grievances. Moreover, in this particular case, the change had just been successfully introduced on the first shift. As a foreman on the second shift, McCrorie would naturally be on his mettle to show that he could do as well. And an added element of urgency was injected because the change in work method was part of a plant-wide economy drive. Any foreman who knows the score is well aware that he must be able to implement such plans, smoothly and rapidly—or else.

Isn't Foreman McCrorie's Behavior Understandable?

If Foreman McCrorie's feelings, ideas, and expectations were similar to those that we have suggested, he would naturally have felt frustrated and resentful when Harris sympathized with Bell's fears. If you had been in the foreman's position, wouldn't you have sharply resented anything which you interpreted as unwarranted interference? And might it not seem as if Harris practically told Bell that he didn't have to accept the work assignment? [8] Or, if McCrorie's behavior was part of a plan, rather than an emotional reaction, that too would be understandable. The case

[8] The effect of feelings, as an element in interpretation, is illustrated in this case by the fact that, at the arbitration hearing, not only the foreman but also the plant superintendent and the personnel administrator testified (in apparent good faith) that "Harris told Bell he didn't have to do the job."

report doesn't show exactly why McCrorie did what he did. But studying any such case can sharpen a person's perceptiveness as to what may be happening *in* other people.

Even the Inside View Is Multiple

This same case also illustrates the idea that wherever more than one person is involved, there is more than one inside view. For example, the shop steward's view of the situation was evidently quite different from the foreman's. And even though Harris and Bell saw eye to eye in regard to certain features of the case, self-feelings would naturally make quite a difference in what each of them saw as the central issue. For instance, it looks as though the most important issue for Mr. Bell was his personal safety. (And wouldn't it be natural for anyone in his position to feel that way?) But for Mr. Harris a more important issue may have been: What are the rights—including those of job tenure—of a committeeman?

Such individual differences of viewpoint set up limits to understanding.

An Unavoidable Limitation

As already suggested, no one can get all the way to the center of any other person's private world. *This makes everyone an outsider, to some extent, in relation to everyone else.* The following statement calls attention to a barrier for understanding:

1. Every individual exists within a continually changing world of experience of which he is the center. (This private world is technically referred to as the individual's "phenomenal field.")

2. A person's perceptual field is reality-for-him. What he responds to is *his environment as he perceives it.*[9]

For case analysis, an implication of that statement is this: Among all the things that are so—objectively speaking—in any situation, reality for each individual is limited to (1) the relatively few items of which he is aware (consciously or unconsciously), and (2) his interpretation of this relatively small part of what is there to be seen. This kind of limitation in each person's view means that firsthand "experience can be a block." Students have many chances to notice that people in cases are often shut off from each other because of what they think they know. Rumer Godden has expressed that idea in a way which is applicable to case analysis: "I sometimes think experience can be a block. Because if you think you know, you don't ask questions; or if you ask, you don't listen to the an-

[9] This statement is adapted from Carl R. Rogers's important book *Client Centered Therapy,* chap. 11.

swers. Everyone, everything, *each* thing is different so that it isn't safe to know. You have to grope." [10]

Three Other Limitations

Sometimes people who are trying to get an inside view of a case are handicapped by self-imposed limits. Two of these are overconfidence and overidentification.

Overconfidence

It's easy to become so enthusiastic in making inferences that one endows them with the solidity of facts. For example, when inexperienced case analysts make inferences (such as those suggested in the preceding pages about how Foreman McCrorie *may* have felt), they often assume that this was how he *did* feel. But even after studying a detailed case report or—better still—listening appreciatively to a firsthand account, a margin of ignorance needs to be allowed for. Case students can learn to take account of the difference between *guessing*, as an outsider, and *experiencing*, as a participant.

Partisanship

Another psychological hazard for case students is that of overidentification with one person or group in a case. Sometimes a student goes further than he meant to in trying to attain a sympathetic understanding of some participant's viewpoint. In case discussions, it is often apparent that a student sympathizes so strongly with someone in a case that he slides right over into that "corner" and can't see the case from any other angle. But when that happens to a case student, he has lost what could be one of his greatest assets, the relatively detached and dispassionate view of an impartial outsider.

Lack of Perspective

To be an insider is not to see all. Certain characteristics of the typically inside view can be disadvantageous. For instance, the resentment and hostility which participants may feel toward each other can be the most serious kind of barrier to understanding. Also, a detailed, intimate view is apt to be mostly foreground. Small occurrences, slight changes, personal feelings, short-term aims, and immediate consequences—such ephemeral things are apt to loom large for insiders. Often they divert attention from the impersonal requirements and long-range possibilities which outsiders easily recognize as important.

[10] Rumer Godden, *An Episode of Sparrows*, p. 199.

One thing that a case student can scarcely fail to notice is that people in cases often react emotionally. They seem to be unable—or unwilling?—to let the light of pure reason be their guide. And many cases illustrate the idea that when circumstances exert severe stress on a person, his feelings may temporarily shorten and narrow his view as to what is most important in the situation.

For example, the cases of *The Nervous Welder* and *The Outraged Sales Manager* [11] are quite different in outward circumstances. But one feature that is common to both those situations is that a person in authority acted impetuously, on the spur of the moment, apparently spurred on by strong feeling. Apparently both the foreman and the Manager neglected to consider relevant facts and organizational principles that they knew about. For example, both men were probably as well aware as any student of personnel relations that in a doubtful case, the safe and (organizationally) sound procedure is to suspend an employee rather than to discharge him. But who even thinks of drawing on his knowledge of correct procedure when he is being swept along on a flood tide of feeling?

A RECAP CASE: THE STUDENT WHO "COULDN'T" UNDERSTAND

The following case illustrates several limitations of an inside view. It also shows how case method can help a person to put his experience to good use.

In a course on labor relations, a student came to his instructor with the following complaint: "I can't understand all this case method stuff. And no matter how hard I work, you always give me bad marks. On the last case I spent over four hours in preparation. But you gave me a C on my paper."

INSTRUCTOR: Do you think perhaps part of your trouble is that you don't clearly visualize the situations as they may have looked to the people who took part in them? I don't mean just the facts. It's more the nature of the difficulty *for them*. You seem to appreciate management's difficulties pretty keenly. But it looks to me as though you don't grasp what union officers are up against.

STUDENT: That's right, I don't. I can't understand what all the shouting is about. All they're trying to do is make trouble.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, haven't you ever been in a situation where *you* wanted to make trouble, where you didn't want to cooperate with people in authority—because you felt they were exercising their power arbitrarily?

STUDENT: I sure have. In fact, since the beginning of this term we've been

[11] You may not remember the brief reference to this case in Chap. 3. In a nutshell, the situation involved the prospective sale of two trucks. When the sale fell through, the Manager felt that the mechanic had diverted the sale to a competitor—out of resentment at being refused a sales bonus. Acting on that view, the Manager discharged the mechanic.

involved in an endless series of difficulties like that. We're in the middle of the thing right now.

INSTRUCTOR: Fine! Why don't you just write that out, as a case?

STUDENT: What—the *whole thing?*

INSTRUCTOR: Oh, no, just a couple of incidents—enough to show what's going on.

STUDENT: O.K. I'll do that.

(The next week the student turned in the following report.) [12]

A PARTICIPANT'S ACCOUNT OF DIFFICULTIES IN A DORMITORY

In the spring of 1949, residents of the junior dormitory were given application blanks for rooms in the elegant new senior dormitory (Lee House) which was to be opened in the fall.

Twenty-one of us, who had been close friends for several years, held a meeting, chose the rooms we wanted, all on the sixth floor, and appointed a representative who was at the head of the line with our blanks on the morning when applications were first accepted.

The result of this planning was that our group occupied a substantial part of the sixth floor of Lee House and became more closely integrated than ever. From then on, we became organization-conscious and adopted a name. We became, in other words, a team, and we proved to be a potent force with which the management of the dormitory often had to reckon. We attempted to woo the new director of housing and dining by asking him to our housewarming party. He accepted and was introduced to our group.

Three of the issues in which our team played a prominent part were:

1. Improvement of the dining situation
2. Resistance to the standards of dress for the dining room
3. Availability of the roof for sunbathing

Although many of our victories were in fact trivial, they represented to us the partial attainment of self-determination and freedom from edictal restrictions which was the major threat against which we had organized in the first place.

The Dining Room Situation

The dining room was run on a contract basis. The quality of food was good at first but steadily deteriorated until one of our number refused to eat dinner there, although he could get no refund. There was general griping but no action among the other house residents. The size and heterogeneity of the living group made it difficult for the majority of house residents to act in unison.

As a team, however, our small group felt the strength, security, and determination that go hand in hand with unity of purpose, and we undertook to

[12] In reading his account you will notice that it is more of a caricature than a realistic picture. As a case report (on a state of affairs and relationships in a college dormitory), the following account is lamentable. But as a report on a reporter's state of mind, we find it illuminating. It is reproduced here exactly as it was written, except for the names and the original title (which was *Teamwork in a Living Group*).

annoy the management by our dining room tactics. Our activities were definitely detrimental to the majority of house residents, but they were acts of defiance against the hardships our group was being forced to endure. Our chief strategy was to monopolize ten or fifteen tables during the entire two hours of dinner, which of course made the other tables uncomfortably crowded.

The only response from the management was a feeble [13] request for us to eat and leave, but no attempt was made to improve or even discuss the cause of our dissatisfaction.

One evening, after stuffing twenty-one slices of squash pie into a half-gallon mustard jar, we went to the housing director and asked him if he would be willing to discuss the food situation with us. He agreed, and the next day the meeting took place. He explained the problems of procurement and finances, and he listened while we suggested possible improvements in the menu. Our requests were reasonable: among others, jelly for toast in the morning, fresh fruit, spaghetti now and then, and a substitute meal on Fridays for those of us who did not like fish. Most of these requests were granted.

Thereafter, we griped less about the food and felt more inclined to accept the chef's failures, because—

1. Our ideas had been heard and accepted.
2. We better understood management's problems.
3. We knew that an effective bargaining mechanism existed.

Management profited from this incident in increased good will among the students. The situation had been badly handled, however, for the management never took the initiative in trying to do anything constructive although it must have been perfectly obvious against what we were rebelling. As the perpetrators of the contract-feeding plan, the management should have felt some responsibility to ask us for ideas and to explain the situation to us, instead of waiting for the inevitable trouble.

Standards of Dress for the Dining Room

Management only learned part of their lesson, however. Reports were circulated that the dean of seniors was insisting that Lee House residents wear coats and ties at dinner. We felt that this demand was unreasonable, since some of us worked evenings in laboratories and only took time out to return to the dormitory for dinner. That evening our group wore to dinner T-shirts on which were painted collars and ties, bearing the inscription "Eat at Joe's."

Management this time took the hint and called a meeting of all house residents. A vote showed overwhelming objection to the dean's proposal, and it was decided to request that coats and ties be worn at the students' option, especially on Fridays when our girl friends and families were invited as guests.

[13] When asked what he meant by "feeble," the student gave the following explanation: "One of our group, Jim, was a student waiter. The director sent Jim over to us with a message asking us to take up less space. Naturally, Jim just went through the motions. And the director never followed it up."

Sunbathing on the Roof

The bulletin board one day announced that the roof was hereafter to be off limits. House residents did not pay much attention. A lock appeared on the door, but it soon disappeared. Another lock appeared, and this time the lock, door, and hinges disappeared, for which I hesitate to admit that our team was responsible.

Then, at long last, the students were informed by the management that the local fire department required the roof to be uninhabited. Management had blundered by failing to give us the facts and to reveal their motives. The industrial relations textbook states: "People cannot be counted on to do what they are told either through docility or from gratitude to a benevolent management." Since we were far from docile and in our eyes the management was far from benevolent, the effect of such a blanket demand as to forbid access to the roof for sunbathing should have been predictable. Had the demand been accompanied by an explanation, the responses might have been different.

These three incidents illustrate the fact that management did not practice teamwork. The smooth settlement of the coats-and-ties issue, a direct result of codetermination, evidently failed to convince the management that cooperation was more desirable than autocratic administration. Even after the two instructive dining room incidents, a locked door was thrust at us without explanation. As a result of one-way communication via the bulletin board, we were left to choose our own goals and to exercise our teamwork toward ends that were sometimes undesirable to the organization as a whole. We could not understand the organizational objectives unless we were informed of them, and we were usually informed only after we had started trouble. Foresighted management could have foreseen possible sources of irritation and encouraged our participation in such decisions, thereby turning our team spirit into useful constructive channels. Under such circumstances, I have no doubt that Lee House could have become a much more pleasant place for students and management alike.[14]

An Experience Used as a Start toward Understanding

A few days after turning in this account of his difficulties, the student had another conference with the instructor. And in discussing his experience (as ringleader of a rebellious clique), the student withdrew his previous statement—that he couldn't understand how anyone could be so uncooperative as union officers appear to be in some cases. He now saw that he could easily understand it. By using his own experience as a springboard, he could project his mind into situations where the outward circumstances and organizational roles were unfamiliar. And as he

[14] If you are interested in semantic analysis, the foregoing account offers ample scope for it. And a small sample of such an analysis is given a few pages farther along in this chapter.

did so, he found that he could appreciate how a union officer, or a rank-and-file union member, might feel moved to rebel against what seemed like arbitrary exercise of authority. He even saw that in many situations, being uncooperative might be a natural (though immature) reaction to outward events, rather than a permanent defect in a person's character.

AN OUTSIDE VIEW

Naturally, each person who looks at a situation—whether from inside or from outside—has his own point of view. (That's one reason why discussing cases can be so interesting and so educational.) But in spite of such individual differences, an outside angle of view has certain characteristic qualities.

These qualities can be suggested by words like: detached, dispassionate, disinterested, rational, objective, and nonpartisan. Merely being outside a situation, by the accident of circumstance, isn't enough to ensure that a person can think objectively. But it certainly helps. And if an outsider can maintain a nonpartisan attitude while "getting into" a case (by informing himself about facts), he has more incentive to explore the whole situation, and greater freedom to think rationally, than an insider who is hampered by partisan feelings. For instance, an impartial outsider doesn't accept or reject *uncritically* a highly colored statement that presents only one side of a case. *He wants to hear all sides, and to verify all statements, in order to get an all-round picture of the situation as a whole.*

The advantages of an impartial view have been demonstrated in countless disputes between unions and managements. When the disputing parties find it impossible to settle their differences, they often call in an impartial arbitrator. He hears both sides of the dispute, and tries to get at the facts. He takes account of the subjective forces that seem to have impelled people to do what they did. But in making his award on the issue submitted to arbitration, his reasoning is based primarily on accepted principles of justice and on the written "law of the situation" (as spelled out by the labor agreement currently in force between the disputing parties).

An Outside View Can Include Analysis of Language [15]

Everyone who is interested in trying to understand human nature needs to develop skill in analyzing language. Even when the person whom one seeks to understand is far removed, in space-time, something can be

[15] Since General Semantics is the subject of our next chapter, you may wonder why we mention semantic analysis here. Our reasons for doing so are these: We welcome the chance to show that the three parts of our analytical method aren't separate. Also,

learned about him if it is possible to study his way of expressing himself.[16] Any unusual use of words may offer a valuable clue as to how a speaker (or writer) looks at things, and how he feels about what he sees.

The spontaneity of language in the *Account of Dormitory Difficulties* makes that report especially useful as a source of insight into the private world where that student was living. Our present purpose is merely to illustrate how semantic analysis can yield some understanding, even of a total stranger. Therefore, we limit our analysis almost entirely to the words "group" and "teamwork" as used in that student's report. (Incidentally, their importance to him is suggested by his use of both of them in his title: *Teamwork in a Living Group.*)

What Does the Word "Group" Seem to Have Connoted[17] *for That Writer?*

In the body of the report the term "group" is used almost exclusively in referring to a unit of "twenty-one of us who had been close friends for several years." Only once—after the title—is the word group (in the expression "the living group") used to denote the whole community of students living in Lee House.[18] In describing and defending the activities of the clique, in which he appears to have been an active member, the student makes it plain that the interests of "our group" are of central importance to him. He seems to have been relatively indifferent to what happened to other house residents (his fellow seniors). ("Management," of course, was beyond the pale.)

On what use of words is this interpretation of a writer's meaning based? "Our group" became more closely knit than before as a consequence of planned activity which made it possible to occupy "a substantial part" of the sixth floor in the new senior dormitory. "From then on, we became organization-conscious[19] and adopted a name. We became, in other words,

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we don't want to leave entirely unexamined the language used in the *Account of Dormitory Difficulties*. And since that report may still be fresh in your mind, it seems convenient to review it now.

[16] It has been well said: "Language is not only a tool; it is the person himself. He makes his language, but his language also makes him." Frederic E. Pamp, Jr. "Liberal Arts as Training for Executives," p. 41.

[17] In General Semantics, the difference between the terms "denote" and "connote" corresponds to the difference between what a person looks *at* and what he looks *with*. A word denotes what it points to in the world of objective facts. What a word connotes is its subjective meaning, the feeling tones or images it arouses inside the mind of the person who uses it.

[18] Incidentally, in the colloquial usage of that university, the adjective "living" merely points to the fact that the people described in the report were housed under one roof. It seems likely that the student reporter intended to emphasize that his case did not concern "work groups" such as those portrayed in labor relations cases.

[19] Becoming "organization-conscious" certainly seems to have a special connotation

a team.... The size and heterogeneity of the living group made it difficult for the majority of house residents to act in unison. As a team, however, our small group felt the strength, security, and determination that go hand in hand with unity of purpose.... Our activities were definitely detrimental to the majority of house residents, but they were acts of defiance against the hardships [20] our own group was being forced to endure."

Further insight into the connotation of the word "group" is provided by two different meanings apparently assigned to the term "teamwork" as used in that student's report.

What Does "Teamwork" Seem to Connote in That Report?

The word "teamwork" does not appear in the report until the last paragraph, where the student sums up the meaning-for-him of the behavior that he has been describing. In explaining what "these three incidents illustrate," he asserts that "management did not practice teamwork." In the student's view, it was management's fault that "our teamwork" was directed "toward ends that were sometimes undesirable to the organization as a whole." Even from "the smooth settlement of the coats-and-ties issue,... management only learned part of their lesson." Neither that experience nor the other "instructive" dining room incident convinced "the management that cooperation was more desirable than autocratic administration." [21]

"Teamwork" by "us," then, is concerted action in "defiance" of "management" authority? But "management did not practice teamwork" because "they failed to foresee possible sources of irritation," or to "reveal their motives" in talking things over with "us," or to listen to "our" point of view before making decisions that affected "us"? If this analysis is correct, "teamwork" had one meaning when used to describe action by

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here, one far removed from the meaning suggested earlier in this chapter by the term organizational view. And becoming a team seems to have been accomplished in jig time—at least in that student's mind—apparently merely by acquiring an aim and a name.

[20] There was, then, a significant difference between the degree of hardship suffered by "our group" and that suffered by the majority who were up against precisely the same circumstances? The phrase "our own group" suggests that "we" are set apart from the majority who also "suffered" from "hardships" such as those imposed by "the perpetrators of the contract-feeding plan."

[21] Doesn't this sentence suggest that, in writing his report, the student thought he was illustrating how unreasonable *other people* can be and how little "they" understand that cooperation is desirable? "Management" continued to practice "one-way communication via the bulletin board." "They ... blundered by failing to give us the facts and to reveal their motives." "We," on the other hand, certainly communicated "our" feelings clearly—in the language of rebellious action.

"our own group," and quite another meaning when applied to behavior by "management" toward "us."

Most of us find it easier, and more congenial, to analyze the language of other people than to look critically at our own. But anyone who wants to improve his performance in doing things with other people may be able to do so if he can dispassionately analyze his own language.

What Else Looks Different from Outside?

One thing that often looks different to insiders and outsiders is the nub of a difficulty or, as we usually call it, an issue. A brief case reference will illustrate this point.

CASE REFERENCE: THE FRAT HOUSE COOK

After class one day a student lingered.

STUDENT: Professor, . . . we've got a problem in our fraternity. Our cook is a thief. Some of the brothers want to call the police. But we don't want a scandal. What would you advise?

PROFESSOR: You mean he takes students' things?

STUDENT (with shocked expression): Oh, no! He's never touched any of our personal belongings. He takes supplies.

A few questions elicited the information that the cook (an excellent worker) was being paid considerably less than the going rate. Several times, he had asked for a raise. But the brothers "just couldn't afford to give him more money right now."

In view of this information, the professor suggested redefining the issue. Instead of asking: "How shall we handle this thief?" why not put it like this: "Here's a good man being underpaid. Is there any way we can give him more money, within the limits set by our budget?"

The solution that then suggested itself was to combine two items in the budget, the cost of supplies and the cook's wages. This would enable the brothers to tell the cook that they knew he was being underpaid, and give him an opportunity to earn his raise by saving money on the buying.

This solution was adopted. A report a few weeks later showed that it seemed to be working satisfactorily.

What Does It Show?

In defining an issue, a person does more than merely look *at* facts that are—or were—so. He is interpreting facts. If he is an insider, he may do so intuitively. Without formulating an issue in words, he asks himself —in effect: "What do these facts mean, for action?" And from his answer (or decision) consequences follow.

In the case involving the cook, an outsider was able to be of some service to insiders. Once a person has found that the dispassionate view of an outsider can be useful, why doesn't he always try to get such help? Perhaps many of us aren't sufficiently objective even to recognize that we might profit from an outside view of our own behavior.

An Exceptional Case

In that respect and in others, a report published by Professors Weschler and Reisel[22] is exceptional. How many teachers would care to do what Professor Weschler did, when he invited a clinical psychologist to observe all members of a study group, including the leader? How many would be willing to have the report on himself published, if it showed that what he did was not wholly in accord with what he said (and evidently thought) that a teacher should do? Hats off to Professor Weschler.

Issues in Other Cases

All the cases in this book illustrate some of the same general ideas about issues, two of which may be singled out:

1. A person's view as to *what the issue is* largely determines what his answer will be (whether this answer is expressed in immediate action or merely as an opinion).

2. A person's view of *what is at stake* is affected by whether he gives a high priority to organizational requirements, or whether he takes a person-centered view of the situation—perhaps even an ego-centered view.

Two different views of an issue in Case I. For example, in the case of *A Displaced Seminar Group,* an egocentric view of the immediate issue (for the teacher) at the moment when the carpenters burst into "his" room might be stated like this: "Am I to be pushed around by a couple of carpenters?" But as soon as he learned the facts, his conception of the issue changed. It now appeared to be: "When a management representative receives a communication (amounting to an order) from an administrative official, what should he do about it?"

Both the above questions point to their own answers. But they point in opposite directions for action. That's what we mean by saying that a person's view of the immediate issue largely predetermines what he does (or thinks) next.

Similarly, in the situation where there were difficulties in a student dormitory, immediate issues[23] were defined (consciously or otherwise) by a student clique, and answered in their action. Judging by the language of action, one central point seems to have been at issue—for those students—in all three incidents: "Are we going to let *them* get away with exercising arbitrary authority over *us*?" But anyone who took a dispas-

[22] Irving R. Weschler and Jerome Reisel, *Inside a Sensitivity Training Group.* A digest of that case is given, as Case VI, in Part Five of this book.

[23] The student's report referred to three issues, one of which he later specified as the "coats-and-ties issue." In his first statement (p. 73) there seems to be a confusion as to what an issue is—aims and behavior being lumped together as issues.

sionate view of the situation in which those students were embroiled might see the crux of it as an organizational issue: When members feel that rules are unjustifiable, or that authority is autocratically imposed, what courses of action could they suitably take?

Clarity Isn't Enough

But merely taking an outside view doesn't automatically provide understanding. It's quite possible to be *too detached*. For example, when clear thinking is coupled with feelings of indifference, an onlooker may overlook or underestimate difficulties that are major facts of a case—for insiders. But oversimplification of actual difficulties can make them seem simpler to solve than they are—or were.

We shan't illustrate that general idea here because it applies in the same way—only more so—to a long-range view, which we take up next.

A LONG-RANGE VIEW

In taking a long view of any social situation, a person looks beyond issues for immediate action. And he looks below the surface ripples of small incidents. What he looks at is something more than any single incident. The focus of his interest is the whole situation in which a series of incidents has developed. And as he begins to get the whole picture, abstract ideas emerge from the welter of detailed facts.

To take a long view is to think at the level of abstraction where every case has common denominators with other situations. In doing so, the following lines of inquiry make natural starting points:

General principles. What operative principles, for productive interaction, are illustrated (either positively or negatively) in this case? Does the case suggest any need to modify some principle which seemed valid in another case?

Long-term organizational requirements. What might be learned from this case about possibilities for meeting long-term requirements, in any organization?

Fundamental issues. What issues that are important in many social situations can be clarified by thinking about this case?

Organization policies. By studying this case and by comparing it with other situations, what ideas can be developed as to the need and the practicability of using policy as a means to guide administrative decisions? [24]

In viewing any situation from long range, and in a rocking chair state

[24] We use the term "organization policy" to differentiate this kind of policy from the purposes (also based on principle) which make up a person's code of behavior *as an individual.*

of mind, a person has certain advantages over participants who are hard pressed by immediate circumstances. For example, a student may notice, in case after case, that participants gradually limited their freedom of action in the long run because they habitually acted on a short and narrow view of what was at stake. A serious student who has got that far may get farther—*if* he becomes interested in searching cases for a wider range of general ideas than he could hope to pick up directly, in firsthand experience.

What Shows Up—in Specific Cases?

General Principles

When a student takes a long view of a case, he can look for concrete illustrations of general principles which are widely accepted—in theory. One such principle is this: A person must be presumed innocent unless there is proof of his guilt. Two situations already referred to in this book offered opportunities for acting on that principle. What do they show?

In *The Outraged Sales Manager* the Manager discharged a mechanic chiefly on the grounds of "disloyalty." An arbitrator reinstated the employee primarily on the grounds that (1) the burden of proof lies with the accuser, and (2) no such proof was given in that case. The Manager felt sure that the employee had diverted a sale to a competitor. But he couldn't prove it. Does his behavior show that abstract principles can't be of any use in a stress situation?

The Oil Rag Case shows how a person can use the controls provided by principles (and by common sense) even at a moment when circumstances and natural feelings of resentment might combine to make him react emotionally.[25]

People who have read about the treasurer being hit by an oil rag have often asked: "What did he do then?" (Other facts of the case are that he had just noticed a machine operator tying a knot in an oil rag, and since he was only a few feet away from this man when he was hit, it might have been a natural reaction to whirl around and accuse that man of throwing the rag. But apparently such a reaction was not in character for Mr. Deane, the treasurer.) He immediately realized that he did not positively *know* who had thrown the rag. And his good sense told him that he almost certainly could not find out then and there.[26]

[25] In Chap. 2 we suggested that writers and readers of cases break the ground rules of case method if they assume the privileges of mind readers. The following statements, about what went on in the mind of a participant, have not been read into the case by inference. They are taken from the treasurer's account of what happened.

[26] The culprit himself would have reason to deny it. And his fellow workers would undoubtedly stand by him when he was under fire by one of "them." Any attempt to

Common sense might be enough to dissuade a person in Mr. Deane's position from taking direct disciplinary action. But apparently common sense was not all that influenced him. He also took account of the principle that guilt must be proved. And he recognized that his grounds for suspicion did not amount to proof. Thus, even under provocation, and with almost no time for reflecting, a general principle in Mr. Deane's mind affected the course of events. Other general principles which determined the treasurer's action as an organizational member included the following:

1. A person in a staff role (as a treasurer is) cannot properly take direct disciplinary action toward any employee who is not his own subordinate. But—

2. When a breach of conduct by an employee in another department comes to the attention of any member of management, he cannot properly disregard it—especially when that kind of behavior (if repeated) could endanger anyone.

3. Therefore, a staff man who becomes involved in an episode such as the oil rag Incident should bring the matter to the attention of the member of line management who is responsible for discipline, in the area where the breach of conduct occurred.

The treasurer acted on the second and third of these principles when he mentioned the incident of the oil rag (informally) at the next weekly luncheon meeting of department heads and top executives. During the discussion that followed, several long-term organizational requirements were seen in a new light.

Long-term Organizational Requirements

In organizations, two demands which must be met are: strengthening the authority of line management, and building (or altering) an organizational structure which can meet existing needs. Effective action on both those requirements followed the oil rag incident. In discussing the horseplay (which the treasurer had not only seen but felt) members of management recognized that such behavior couldn't develop in a department where supervision was adequate at all times. But in the production department, up to that time, the acting assistant foremen (who were in charge when the foreman had to be out of the department) had no authority to enforce discipline. Acting on the general idea that authority must be commensurate with responsibility, the chief executive agreed to

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hold an informal court of inquiry in such a situation would probably be worse than useless. It would inevitably produce a work stoppage. And the testimony offered would almost certainly be to the general effect that everyone had been so busy working that no one was even aware that the treasurer was walking through the department, still less that he had been hit by an oil rag.

changes in the status and functions of acting assistant foremen (who became assistant foremen, with authority to enforce discipline).

Other case illustrations. Not all cases offer positive illustrations of action to meet long-term organizational requirements. In many cases it looks as though participants were chiefly concerned with getting short-term results. For instance, in the situation described by the *Student Who "Couldn't" Understand,* it seems that members of a student clique cared little about what happened to their fellow students in the dormitory, and took an exceedingly slanted view of requirements for productive interaction between students and management (as represented by the director of housing and dining).

Even in the case of *The Nervous Welder* (where all the participants were adults), one gets the impression that management representatives *may* have been much more eager to oust a shop steward than to promote productive union-management relations. Hasty action (such as that which results in an unwarranted discharge) seems often to be associated with a short and narrow view of issues.

What Fundamental Issues Show Up in These Cases?

If a person's focus remains fixed on immediate decisions and actions in any given case, he may never even see the fundamental issues that are there to be met. But when anyone takes a long-range view, underlying issues stand out. And once they are seen, they usually look more important than the kind of short-term issue-for-action that can be formulated as: *What shall I do now?* Of course, the mere fact of distance doesn't necessarily reveal fundamental issues. That aspect, even of a remote case, is apparent only to a person who has cultivated a capacity for distance vision.

Central issues in Case II. For instance, an inexperienced student might dismiss the case of *A New Volunteer* as too trivial to think about. But in any such situation there are social implications beneath and beyond such immediate issues as: "Who ought to answer the telephone?" or "When a supervisor hasn't explained, how does a new worker know what to do?" For example, part of what was at stake in the Blood Service Center could be formulated like this: What are the most important organizational responsibilities *of* volunteer workers, and of paid workers and supervisors *toward* volunteers?

Fundamental issues involved in management authority. In all the cases referred to so far in this book, there are issues associated with management authority. In a case like *A Displaced Seminar Group,* that kind of issue may not look significant. But if it had been disregarded by a teacher (who was also a supervisor), case students would rightly fasten on that behavior as an important point for analysis.

In the *Oil Rag Case,* a central issue that was recognized—in action—

by an executive could be stated this way: What are the major responsibilities of a staff man who is also a member of top management?

In the cases of *The Frat House Cook* and of *Difficulties in a Student Dormitory*, one gets little more than a glimpse of fundamental issues. (Even at that, a case analyst may find more food for thought than was gathered up at the time by participants.) But one question of overriding importance that shows up in both those cases is an issue involved in "direct action." [27] What is at stake when a group (for example, of dormitory students) decides to take the law into its own hands or when an individual (like the frat house cook) takes direct action to meet his personal demands? [28]

It is often said that when a person is deciding what action to take, as an organizational member, he should be guided by policy. If he were so guided, what sort of instrument might he be using?

What Shows Up, in Relation to Organization Policies?

When a student looks into cases for concrete illustrations of organization policies, what does he see? Perhaps one of the first things he notices is that the word "policy" is used freely and somewhat loosely. Does it seem perhaps that policy has no specific meaning if it can be applied indiscriminately to vague aspirations, general plans, technical procedures, and hard-and-fast rules? [29]

In our opinion, organization policies could help people to fulfill important responsibilities of managing if every such policy met the following specifications:

1. *An organization policy should affirm some long-term purpose for the organization as a whole.* (Naturally any such purpose should accord with valid principles. For example, policies for personnel relations should reflect valid principles of sociology and ethics.)

2. *A policy should commit management representatives*, at all organizational levels, to reaffirm and reenforce the stated purpose, in specific decisions and in other daily behavior.[30] But—

3. *A policy should leave scope for discretion by all management rep-*

[27] Here, as elsewhere in this text, we use the term direct action in its specialized meaning: to denote self-help without reference to community law, however that law is set up—whether by a labor agreement, a government procedure, a plant rule, or merely the unwritten law of civilized behavior.

[28] Whenever an organizational member thinks of taking direct action, wouldn't he be well-advised to think about it at the level of principle, and in relation to long-term organizational requirements? So viewed, might not the issue be restated: Under what conditions, if any, is a member entitled to take direct action?

[29] For interesting ideas and material on company policy, see Stewart Thompson, *Management Creeds and Philosophies*.

[30] These two citeria for organization policies are given, along with five others, by Geneva Seybold, in her report, "Statements of Personnel Policy."

resentatives who are expected to use it, in a variety of specific situations and over a considerable period of time. In this respect, a policy differs from a rule. A rule needs to be inflexible. It tells people what they must —or must not—do. But a policy needs to be flexible, because it is intended to guide decisions by responsible representatives of organizational purpose.

What Do Case Illustrations Show?

When a student looks for that kind of policy (in words and in action), he may not find many illustrations. What he may notice in some cases is that from the angle of a first-line supervisor, or a rank-and-file worker, management policies look negative and restrictive. Sometimes policy pronouncements wear two faces: one which looks smilingly outward, toward the general public, and another which frowns at employees on the work level. Can rank-and-file workers be expected to see the positive [31] aspect of organization policies if their experience with policies is chiefly negative—for instance, because a foreman in refusing some request says: "I'm sorry. I couldn't do that. It would be contrary to company policy." But there are cases which show that organization policies can be instruments for freeing organizational members. One such case is that of *A Critic Criticized* (given in Part Five of this book). In that case, a chief executive formulated and applied policies as one way to work on the fundamental issue: How can we "make the world safe for diversity"?

Four Limitations

Four possible limitations of a long view can be serious when that view is taken by an outsider.

Ignorance of details. From far off, one cannot get a realistic picture of all the small details which must be sized up and coped with in any actual situation. (This is one reason why thinking at relatively high levels of abstraction often trails off into vagueness.)

Indifference? The poignancy of human feelings may not come through —at long distance.

That attitude was expressed by one student in writing about the first case (in a seminar), which had been taken directly from the experience of the person who presented it to the group: "I think everyone has felt the same relief in discussing a case like this one, one that tells about the real, personal experiences of people, instead of just talking about arbitration cases." (When a teacher read that comment, he realized that he

[31] The purpose and consequence of a positive policy have been summed up (in the realm of foreign affairs) by William Ernest Hocking in "America's World Purpose": "In simplest terms, to have a positive policy is to make history instead of letting it just happen to us, or trying to fend it off."

hadn't gotten far in helping that student to project his mind into remote cases.)

But college students aren't alone in feeling that what happens to people at some remote time or place is quite different from the "real, personal experiences" of "people like us." For example, in reading (or writing) news of the world, what happens to a mere handful of people may not look like much. How else could one explain the following comment: "The casualties were negligible. Only five people were killed and twenty wounded."

When such an attitude shows up in a case student, a teacher may regard it as an extremely serious limitation. But case method can help a person to counteract feelings of indifference *if* he uses case analysis as an incentive to get off his high horse, doing the pedestrian work needed to acquaint himself with available information, and using his empathy to bring the situation to life—for him.

A lofty attitude? Anyone who stays at a high altitude in all his thinking about a given case risks developing a lofty attitude. When general principles are applied as the sole means of appraising behavior, mere human beings aren't likely to measure up. A seasoned case analyst recognizes that it's unrealistic, unprofitable, and unsuitable to sit in judgment on people whom he cannot wholly understand. As Professor Lee has said: "Often men and women come to see that there is a difference between sitting in judgment on another, and understanding how and what he sees, assumes and feels. They begin with what is easier, judging, approving, condemning. It is only as they mature in their study of others and themselves, that the easy praising and blaming give way to asking, searching, listening." [32]

If an idea is generally applicable, how useful can it be—as a guide? Aside from personal limitations in the minds of people who take a long view, there's one limitation in every product of the generalizing process. The late Chief Justice Holmes pointed this out as part of a paradox in which he summed up the case both for and against generalizing: "The chief end of man is to frame general propositions. And no general proposition is worth a damn." [33]

Without going as far as that in condemning general statements, one might say that the more general the concept, the less useful it can be as a guide in any specific situation. "'Birds of a feather flock together,' often but not always. Life situations are so complex that any principle has only a contingent force." [34] But no such generalized observation—as

[32] Irving J. Lee, *Customs and Crises in Communication*, pp. xi–xii.

[33] Mark deWolfe Howe (ed.), *Holmes-Pollock Letters*, p. 59.

[34] Sheffield, *op. cit.*, p. 63. The same theme has been interestingly developed by Chris Argyris in his book *Personality and Organization: The Conflict between System and the Individual.*

birds of a feather—can properly be used to support a charge of guilt by association. In fact, a general statement can be dangerous, if accepted as a substitute for experience, though it can be illuminating when it sums up one's own experience.

The Point of View Makes a Difference

It often seems evident that selective perception makes all the difference in a person's opinion as to which of several principles is applicable in any given case. And often, even when people agree that several principles could be applied, they differ sharply as to (1) which is decisive "right now," and (2) how each principle should be interpreted "in this particular case."

The Nervous Welder can serve us again to illustrate these points. In the dispute that grew out of the incident involving Messrs. McCrorie, Bell, and Harris, management representatives supported their position by citing the principle of *management's right to manage.* That principle (in their view) appeared in this case as *the management prerogative to give orders.* As they saw it, Harris had tried to "usurp" this right, thereby giving them "just cause" to discharge him.

The union buttressed its case by relying on *the employee's right of appeal.* And union officers interpreted that principle in this case as Mr. Bell's right to appeal for advice to a representative of his own organization. Management representatives did not deny the right of appeal—in principle. But they insisted that, in this case, that right should have been exercised by Mr. Bell *only after* carrying out his supervisor's order. Then, if he felt he had any grievance, he would have been entitled to appeal his case by using the regular grievance procedure.

WHAT'S NEW?

In reading this chapter, you will have noticed that the ideas aren't new. But what can be a new experience for a case student is to do something with these ideas. He can practice taking an *organizational view* (of most cases), an *inside view* (of remote cases), an *outside view* (of situations where he is a participant), and a *long-range view* (of every case that he can find time to reflect on). As he gains skill in "getting around" with his mind, he may recognize that the benefits to be gained are in proportion to (1) the psychological distance traveled from the starting point, and (2) the degree of success achieved in synthesizing different angles of view.

He may also come to see that it's not only case students who can broaden their scope of view by doing this kind of traveling. For instance, anyone who wants to understand history (in order to learn from it, or to write about it) needs both an outside and an inside view of past events.

Historical judgement and historical imagination, or feeling, ... overlap. They run together and contribute to each other ... as prose overlaps with poetry ... but there is a clear distinction between them. Historical judgement enables a reader to know and estimate the past, to understand it as one whose centre of life is outside it; so a traveler may understand a country of which he is not a native or a house that is not his home. Historical imagination enables a reader not only to see the past but to be of it, to understand it from the inside outwards as though he had been born in it, to feel what it was to be alive then. Without a fusing in him of these two qualities of the historical power, a historian is vulnerable to his prejudices. If his judgement only is strong, he may be betrayed into using it to plead a modern and irrelevant cause; and if his imagination, his gift of self-identification with a living past, is greatly stronger than his judgement, he may lose in perspective more than he gains by intimacy.[35]

In the next chapter, we indicate how semantic analysis may be used by outsiders to get insight into remote cases, and by insiders to get "outsight" on their own minds. But first, here's another case. It points up several ideas presented in this chapter. And it points toward ideas in the next chapter.

CASE III. AN ENGINEER AND A MACHINIST

(Misunderstandings about "Explanations")

A Bit of Technical Background

In a machine shop attached to a metallurgical laboratory, a highly skilled and reliable journeyman machinist had been selected to prepare test rods. His job was a vital link in a research process that began with melting various kinds of ore, was continued by preparing alloys in the foundry, and ended with laboratory testing.

The machinist turned rough castings to specifications, a highly skilled operation which entailed threading both ends of each specimen to fit the tensile testing machine, holding the central portion of the test rod to an exact diameter, and producing a mirrorlike finish. The machining of each rod, from the rough cutting to the high-quality finish, took from two and a half to three hours. After that, the machinist carefully wrapped each rod in paper to protect the surface from the slightest scratch while it was being handled.

Build-up for a Misunderstanding

Apparently no one had ever told the machinist why he had been selected for this important work, or explained to him how his job fitted into the whole process of company operations. But it seems that he wondered what happened to the rods after he had finished working on them. And apparently he was particularly curious as to why so many of them were needed.

One day when the test engineer was walking through the shop, the machinist asked him: "What happens to all my rods?" The engineer answered: "Why don't you come and see for yourself?"

[35] Charles Morgan, *Liberties of the Mind*, pp. 141–142.

It was then arranged with the foreman that the next time a test run was made, the machinist would be invited to come to the laboratory.

A Critical Incident

As reported by the engineer [1] some time afterward, the circumstances during the test were roughly as follows:

In the presence of the machinist, the engineer removed the wrapping and screwed the specimen into the tensile testing machine (which could apply a gradually increasing force up to 100,000 pounds). He then pressed a button and the test began. A pointer on a dial indicated the increasing amount of strain. Simultaneously, an automatic recorder drew a graph of the stress-strain relationship. After about a minute and a half, the engineer disconnected the recorder. (He did this in order to prevent the imminent rupture of the specimen from injuring the delicate recording mechanism. Alloys were never supposed to be used except within a wide safety margin, as indicated by testing. Therefore, there was no need to have an exact record of the last phase of the test.) But the pointer on the dial continued to indicate the amount of increasing strain. About thirty seconds later, the specimen snapped with a loud noise.

The engineer completed his procedure by recording (on the stress-strain diagram) the figure for the breaking point. He was pleased with the results of the test.

But the machinist burst out: "Is that what happens to my rods?"

It struck the engineer as extraordinary that anyone should be surprised, apparently even upset, by witnessing the fact that a test specimen is destroyed when it is "tested to destruction." Why should the machinist seem to take it almost as a personal affront? But there was no time now to ask questions. The machinist abruptly turned around and marched out of the laboratory.

Next day the engineer heard that the machinist had gone straight back to the shop, packed up his tools, and quit.

From this experience, the engineer drew the following conclusions: "That machinist was certainly dumb and emotional. All workers are that way. They are incapable of taking an objective view of things, or of appreciating what science is all about. It was too bad I ever invited him to the laboratory. If I hadn't tried to help him understand what he was doing, he would never have quit. He was a good machinist. But trying to explain anything scientific to workers is just a waste of time—or worse."

Extending a Former Experience, in Another Situation

The foregoing case example was cited at a discussion meeting in a seminar on industrial relations. Most of the students were engineers. The teacher had just been expatiating on the supervisory responsibility of ex-

[1] The following account is not an exact reproduction of the story as first told by the engineer. A few background facts and some interpretations that he supplied later have been fitted in. And most of his technical terminology has been translated into everyday language.

plaining things to workers. ("Every contact is a training opportunity." "Managing is partly teaching." You know the kind of thing teachers say.)

One student spoke up, in sharp disagreement. He knew better. "In a T.W.I.[2] course, we were taught that 'the best kind of explanation is to show people.' But in dealing with workers even that is no good." The engineering student then cited his own experience to prove his point. And it seemed clear that his dramatic account of a firsthand experience had been a clincher for other engineering students.

Practical Consequences

Among the immediate consequences of the student's case report were some practical insights for a seminar teacher. He recognized that he had been unrealistic in taking it for granted that everyone has the same idea as to the meaning of the word "explanation." What could usefully be done, on the spot, to get at the roots of such a multiple misunderstanding? The teacher decided to make a detour. He invited the group to discuss the question: "What constitutes adequate explanation?" To start the ball rolling, the teacher led the talk back to the case example that had just been reported with such dramatic effect. He asked the student: "In your laboratory, was it necessary to have such perfectly machined test rods?"

STUDENT: Of course. Any fool knows that.

TEACHER: I didn't. And even now I don't see the reason for it. Would you mind explaining it to me?

STUDENT (in the patient tone of one who talks to a child): Well, obviously the slightest surface irregularity would set up a stress-strain center of its own. And if that happened, it would vitiate the whole experiment. *Now* do you understand?

TEACHER: Yes, I think so. . . . But did you explain any of that to the machinist?

STUDENT: (with evident embarrassment) Well . . . no . . . I didn't. (After a pause, and as though to himself) I see . . . I guess maybe I really never explained anything, after all.

PARTIAL AND PARTISAN ANALYSIS

The following analysis is not only abbreviated but also incomplete since we are not qualified to analyze a scientific experience that was gained. The analysis is partisan in that it focuses attention on what was *not understood* and *not done* by a person who was unprepared for a social experience. To the teacher, it seemed evident that the engineer now glimpsed

[2] In training within industry courses given during World War II, teachers stressed the practical method: "Tell 'em. Show 'em. Have 'em show you."

for the first time that he had failed the machinist. He had missed a cue for teaching.

This case example illustrates some general ideas that are central in the theory and practice of General Semantics. For instance—

1. Every human experience inevitably has a quality of uniqueness.

2. The degree of understanding that a person can achieve depends, in large measure, on what he brings to the occasion; that is, on his previous experience, his personality, his expectations, and other preconditioning forces. Selective perception can add to objective facts, subtract from them, and color them.

3. Unconscious assumptions are indicated by behavior. But often they are not seen, even in retrospect, by the person who acted on them.

4. Expressive behavior (in words, manner, tone, or action) provides an alert observer with clues to what is happening *in* another person. These are the outward and visible signs of inward experiences.

How and where do these general ideas show up in the case of *An Engineer and a Machinist?*

Simultaneous but Different Experiences in the Same Outward Environment

It seems clear that during the tensile test, the engineer and the machinist had radically different experiences. They stood close together in space. And their eyes were turned in the same direction (toward the tensile testing machine). But each brought with him his own set of preconditioning forces. Therefore, the meaning of what they saw was poles apart. Unquestionably, both of them had experiences. Each man made something out of what he saw happening before his eyes. Why was the nature of these two experiences so different, as judgments and in feelings?

One man followed the progress of a scientific test. His experience was satisfying because the result that he saw was even better than might have been expected. The test reading represented a desirable culmination of a work process.

The other man, with pain and revulsion, witnessed the rapid destruction of a product that he had brought to a high state of perfection, by hours of painstaking craftsmanship.

Selective Perception Affects Meaning

Each man interpreted what he saw. He drew conclusions, and learned by experience. But both men learned things that were not so. Each was boxed up in his own corner of a social situation. And each got his own answer to the question: "What happens when a specimen rod is tested?"

Meaning for the Machinist

To the machinist, it seems that the answer amounted to this: "After one of my rods has been in that machine for a couple of minutes, *there's nothing left of it but misshapen junk.*"

Scientifically speaking, this interpretation is wide of the mark. Being unprepared, the machinist was in no position to understand the purpose or the result of the tensile test. He was not even looking at the exact place where the important results of the test could be seen. His misconceptions were natural, and unfortunate, but perhaps avoidable. Even more unfortunate were the conclusions that he drew and the action that he took in consequence of what he saw. "My skill and craftsmanship are being thrown away here. This is no place for me to work." His prompt action on these inferences deprived the company of an outstanding worker. And it prevented anyone from finding out whether he might have become an interested and informed partner in scientific work.

Meaning for the Test Engineer

The tensile test showed the engineer that a certain alloy of metals, prepared according to a specific formula, could tolerate a high degree of stress-strain. His background of experience enabled him to watch and interpret significant indications of a successful test. But apparently he was unaware, until too late, that another kind of stress-strain test was going on at the same time.

A *concurrent test.* The engineer was not socially alert enough to have foreseen that subjective forces might create a stress situation within a machinist who was unprepared to take a scientific view when he saw one of "his" rods tested to destruction. And the engineer, absorbed in watching another test, was not free to observe any signs that may have been given—before the final explosive reaction—by the human specimen beside him. It also seems that the engineer was as unprepared to interpret the meaning of the human explosion as the machinist was in relation to the tensile test.

Unconscious Assumptions Acted on by the Engineer

In neglecting to help the machinist prepare himself for a stress situation, the engineer apparently acted on the unrealistic assumption that the background and viewpoint of a machinist and an engineer are approximately the same, so that for a machinist to see a test to destruction would be to understand it in the same way as an engineer understood it. Only if that hypothesis had accurately corresponded to current facts in that situation could the engineer be said to have explained anything.

A related assumption appears to have been that a person is a human machine. Only if this assumption were true could it reasonably be supposed that, given the same external conditions, the two mechanisms will operate and register in the same way.

Expressive Behavior Provides Clues to Inner Meaning

In that scanty case report, the following samples of expressive behavior lend themselves to semantic analysis:

"*What happens to all* my *rods?*" (The pronoun "my" indicates an attitude of self-identification with the product of painstaking labor. Such an attitude would naturally make for severe strain in a person who was subjected—without preparation—to a test like that reported in *A Critical Incident.*)

"*Why don't you come and see for yourself?*" (These words suggest the assumption that the machinist would be able to see and understand for himself what was scientifically significant about the tensile test.)

Quitting without notice. (Interpreted in context, the inner meaning of this explosive reaction is plain to see.)

"*That machinist was certainly dumb and emotional.*" (This oversimplified characterization expresses a "dismissal reaction," an unwarranted judgment of another person's behavior.)

"*All workers are like that. . . .*" (Such a sweeping statement indicates a snap judgment and an exaggeration that seem inappropriate for a scientifically trained person. Perhaps it was associated with an unconscious impulse for self-justification, an effort to shift the blame for an unfortunate consequence by locating a convenient scapegoat, and thereby seeming to render unnecessary any further effort to understand what might have been accountable for an undesirable result.)

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL SEMANTICS IN CASE ANALYSIS

> Whether the drama of men talking unfolds in harmony or turmoil depends very much on whether the actors have learned to overcome the impulse to inattention and indifference, to oversimplification and exaggeration, to misunderstanding and misrepresentation.[1]

Many people shy away from semantics. They regard it as a highly abstract subject, an ivory-tower colloquium between scholars on abstruse concepts such as "the meaning of meaning." But it's unrealistic for anyone to dismiss semantics on the assumption that to study meaning would be profitless for him.

Everyone who tries to communicate is necessarily concerned with meaning. And no one who wants to do a better job in his relationships with other people can afford to ignore the work done by students of General Semantics.[2]

Semantics has usually not been used *systematically* as part of case method. But we are convinced that it should be. Therefore, before illustrating how we use semantics in case analysis, we list our main reasons for thinking that students of social relations can profit by becoming familiar with ideas and disciplines developed in General Semantics.

REASONS FOR COMING TO GRIPS WITH GENERAL SEMANTICS

I. Students of General Semantics have studied *language as a form of social behavior.* Whenever any communication actually takes place

[1] Irving J. Lee, *Customs and Crises in Communication*, p. 2.

[2] Alfred Korzybski is generally regarded as the father of General Semantics. See his book *Science and Sanity*. For a simpler and livelier text, see S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action*, from which we have drawn several quotations and borrowed other ideas for use in this chapter.

(because some message gets across), there has been interaction. But it can also be shown that the way in which a person handles language, even in thinking or feeling, makes a difference not only within his own mind but also to other people. (Doesn't that idea have practical implications for case study in social relations?)

II. "*The basic ethical assumption of semantics*, analogous to the medical assumption that health is preferable to illness, *is that cooperation is preferable to conflict.*" [3] [Our italics]

(Isn't that assumption implied in all serious study of social relations?)

III. *Many practices of General Semantics are appropriate and useful for case students.* For instance, General Semanticists make close and protracted observations, looking for case material by which to test and illustrate ideas. Analysis of "language in thought and action" has convinced them that clear thinking and other kinds of productive behavior depend on being able to see and to communicate relationships between abstract ideas and specific instances. Students of semantics develop operative principles *as hypotheses*, subject to review in the light of new evidence. They don't regard their latest findings as fixed and final conclusions. And many students of language recognize that although certain features of scientific method are useful in their field of study, not all their results can properly be called scientific. The nature of their material is such that much of their data cannot be accurately measured. And many of their findings can't be proved. (Students of social relations are in the same box, for the same reasons.)

IV. Many ideas developed in General Semantics are new, and potentially useful, to those of us who have given little thought to language as a form of social behavior. Here are a few such ideas, as samples:

A. *Words are more important than is commonly supposed, because we depend on them even to think with.* Often, too, we use them to stir up feelings (or to calm them down) in ourselves and in other people. But—

B. *Words are a comparatively small part of language, if one includes—as language—all the ways in which we receive and transmit meaning.* For instance, expressive gestures, tones of voice, and manner are part of everyone's language. Often we communicate with other people involuntarily because of the way we speak and act, or sometimes—when someone expected us to say or to do something—by keeping silent, or doing nothing.

C. *What we do, in trying to communicate with other people, is greatly influenced by habit.* And most of us started to form those habits in the first few years of our lives. Professor Lee suggested

[3] Hayakawa, *op. cit.*, p. v.

that it might be profitable to review such habits after reaching maturity. If we did so, perhaps we might wish to change some of them.[4]

D. *Many practices and habits of communication are based on unrealistic assumptions.* Here are two notions that anyone can see through if he examines them in the light of his actual experience.

1. *Meanings are* in *words.* General Semanticists challenge that assumption. For example, "The meanings of words are *not* in the words; they are in *us.*"[5] (Anyone who has ever misunderstood what someone else said or wrote, or whose words have been misinterpreted by someone else, has case material on that point. Later in this chapter we shall return to this idea.)
2. *Communication takes place whenever anyone sends out a verbal message.* (Many of us who act on that assumption know better. Why don't we apply what we know from our experience as listeners? There must be few people who have never had the experience of realizing that they failed to hear—or perhaps to register—something that was said to them.)

V. Another reason why a serious student of social relations might wish to become acquainted with General Semantics is that he gets into their field anyway. In trying to understand human nature and social interaction, he examines expressive behavior, searching for clues to meaning. Since that search requires semantic analysis, doesn't it make sense to try and learn from people whose specialty is analyzing language?

But perhaps the most important reasons why students of social relations should come to grips with semantics are these:

VI. *Semantic disciplines can profitably be used by anyone who is interested in raising the level of his performance as a "socially minded relative."*

VII. *Semantics can serve as a bridge* between theory (in cases) and practice (in a current situation). (It has often been noted, as an inherent weakness in case method, that students have no immediate opportunity to apply most of the recommendations which they make about remote cases. But when case students think and talk about the language used by people in cases, they are doing the same kind of thing that they are thinking and talking about. This makes it possible to practice what they recommend.)

The last two points raise a question that is applicable to any work situation: Will people actually do what it seems (to other people) that

[4] Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–36.

[5] Hayakawa, *op. cit.*, p. 292. Hayakawa develops that idea in chaps. 2 and 11.

they *might do?* In suggesting that semantics can be most profitable for case students *when they practice it,* we're not saying that all students do get that far. In our experience, relatively few people (in courses conducted by case method) have shown much interest in doing applied work in semantics. And sometimes it seems that those who could most benefit by analyzing their own language put up the strongest resistance to the idea of doing any serious work in semantics.[6] In some study groups, it has looked as though a person who needed to make a change in himself—for example, because he had a tendency to verbalize—resented any suggestion that he might usefully study his own language habits. Does such a person unconsciously fear that becoming efficient as a word watcher might show him that he often uses words *as a substitute for thinking?*

However, although relatively few case students are willing to go all the way with semantic disciplines, and some are unwilling even to start, anyone can make rapid headway *if* he becomes interested. And a teacher can help, for instance, by trying to make his own language reasonable, clear, friendly, and appropriately specific. He can also draw attention to desirable consequences that follow such behavior by other members of the group. If he is willing to work on his own language in public, he can use some of his lapses as case material (for example, as was done in Case I). And he can experiment with a three-stage program that has seemed profitable for some students.

THREE STAGES OF STUDYING LANGUAGE BEHAVIOR

Stage 1. Being Introduced to Semantics

A student cannot reasonably be expected to entertain ideas about General Semantics (still less to give them a permanent home in his habits) until some time after he has been introduced to them. At the start, therefore, it's up to a teacher (or training director) to make whatever introduction is needed. As opportunity offers during case discussions, he can call attention to vivid, clear-cut illustrations of a few semantic ideas and practices.

Stage 2. Beginning to Take the Initiative

Usually, a few students embark on semantic analysis while others are still unsure as to what it's all about. If some of the front runners are people with aggressive tendencies, a teacher may have difficulty in helping them to moderate the tone of their talk. When intelligence outruns feel-

[6] Leland Bradford has commented on "needs for and resistances to learning and change," when "the target of education is change and growth in the individual and his behavior." "The Teaching-Learning Transaction," p. 135.

ings of friendliness in critics, their strongest impression may be: Those people (in cases) are falling down again!

No dispassionate critic could deny that language lapses can easily be spotted—in most cases. But a more relevant point for students of social relations is that in *respect to what is accountable for shortcomings with language,* most of us are in the same boat. A teacher's most useful service at this stage may consist in finding case illustrations of language skills.

Stage 3. Applying Semantics

As already suggested, the most productive work in semantics begins when students are ready to look back and forth between the remote cases (which they discuss) and the current situation (in which they are doing the discussing). In this stage they can look, both far and near, for answers to questions such as these: What do people do with words? What habits and assumptions seem to hamper realistic thinking and productive interaction? What skills of language seem to help people feel more ready, and be more able, to learn from each other?

TWO PAIRS OF LANGUAGE HABITS AND TWO SKILLS

In selecting semantic ideas to apply in a study group, every teacher might make different choices. As samples, here are some common habits and everyday skills which can be identified in a wide range of cases. (They are also exemplified in the behavior of many people in discussion groups.)

Two pairs of unproductive habits (easily recognized in the language of other people) are these: (1) "labeling" and "stereotyped thinking," (2) acting on unfitting feelings and on unrealistic assumptions.

Two skills (which are pleasant to identify in one's own language behavior) are: interpreting meaning in contexts, and getting a fitting degree of precision in thinking, speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

If some of the terminology or any ideas in the previous paragraph are unfamiliar to you, so much the better. You'll be in a strategic position to test two hypotheses about case method: First, that case references can help to show what words denote (their generally accepted meaning); second, that a person can make connections between abstract ideas and his everyday life when he can see the ideas in the specific context of a familiar kind of situation.

Labeling and Stereotyped Thinking

Illustrations of labeling are only too easy to find. For instance, in the case of *A Displaced Seminar Group,* a student was labeled as "class pest."

In *The Frat House Cook*, a cook was labeled a "thief." In *A New Volunteer*, any donor without an appointment was labeled "just a walk-in." [7]

In those cases (and others) the habit of labeling lumps together things that are as different as occasional behavior and total personality. (In *A New Volunteer* behavior on one occasion served to identify,[8] as an undesirable group, an aggregate of persons whose presence was greatly needed in that situation.)

The term "stereotyped thinking" [9] denotes what happens when a preconception (as to what must be so) is substituted for an accurate, up-to-date perception of what actually is—or was—so. Sometimes a stereotype is derived from the previous experience of the person who stamps it onto a new situation. For instance, a teacher got into the practice of thinking that a classroom where he customarily worked was, in some sense, *his* room. Nurses at a blood bank let habitual perceptions, derived from dealing with patients, affect their way of receiving blood donors.

Sometimes a stereotype is picked up at second hand, as a mere verbalization. For example, some college students prevent themselves from learning about people in labor unions because they start with the preconception that "all labor leaders are racketeers." Similarly some people in unions have picked up the unrealistic notion that all top executives are money-minded, heartless people who "know nothing and care less" about workers.

Birds of a Feather?

Stereotyping (an inside operation) and *labeling* (an outside troublemaker) can often be seen together, working hand in glove. And both seem closely related to the troublemaking impulses noted by Professor Lee as "inattention and indifference, over-simplification and exaggeration." The lack of alertness and social responsiveness which permit a person to think in stereotypes also make it easy for him to speak irresponsibly, obscuring facts (from himself and from others) by slapping on labels.

Getting to Know Them

Even a beginner at wordwatching rarely has difficulty in recognizing labeling and stereotyping—at long range. For instance, when analyzing labor relations cases, a college student can easily spot such inefficient lan-

[7] See Part Five, Case VI, for a report that shows labeling and some of its consequences.

[8] Semanticists classify labeling as a form of "identification." Korzybski pointed out that this kind of mental sloppiness is often associated with an inappropriate use of the word "is." Anyone who is looking for labels in his own language can profitably watch what he says (in uttering an unfavorable judgment) after the word "is." A practical test of the propriety of such identification of a person with *one attribute* can be made by asking: "*Is that all* he is?"

[9] For a thoroughgoing analysis of stereotypes, their nature, causes, and consequences, see Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, especially chaps. VI–X.

guage habits. And after noticing how they are used in a variety of situations, a case student may become interested in thinking about the motives and consequences of such behavior.

In many labor-management disputes, labels have made convenient weapons. Union officials have condemned management decisions as "arbitrary," and (partly under the influence of a stereotype) have labeled disciplinary action as "discrimination." Members of management, from the opposite camp, have often let fly with such labels as "insubordination" and "disloyalty."

In remote cases, it's easy to see that such behavior is socially undesirable. (In fact, such a judgment is so easy to make that it can trip a case student into labeling a labeler.) In some cases, even the immediate practical consequences of labeling have shown that such inappropriate language can be costly. For example, when the "Outraged Sales Manager" couldn't make his label stick, he had to put the mechanic back to work. He also had to give him back pay, for time during which the mechanic hadn't worked in the company.

Coming Closer Home

After noticing the effects of labeling and stereotyping in remote cases, some students have become interested in searching their immediate environment for case material to illustrate what these troublemaking habits can do in a person's mind. One student found a magazine article which alerted him to the way in which stereotyping might seriously affect the world situation today. In that article, Dr. Jerome Frank pointed out that in the age of nuclear fission, thinking and talking in stereotypes might have tragic consequences. If we are to avoid the kind of war which might wipe out our civilization, we need to think clearly and realistically about existing facts and foreseeable risks. But straight thinking is "made more difficult because nuclear energy has changed the traditional meanings of certain words that we habitually use in thinking about the issues of war and peace." [10] How can we think realistically about the current world situation if we continue to use—in the old ways—words like "defense" (when nothing more than deterrence and retaliation are possible) and "security" (now that no national government can guarantee the safety of civilian citizens, even when they stay at home)?

"Absolute national sovereignty" is another expression which Dr. Frank might have listed among the words whose meaning was obliterated on the day when the first atom bomb was dropped.

Acting on Unfitting Feelings and Unrealistic Assumptions

Feelings may be called unfitting if they push people toward behavior which doesn't match requirements of the situation. And assumptions are

[10] Jerome D. Frank, M.D., "The Great Antagonism," pp. 58–62.

unrealistic when they are far out of line with current facts and needs. This second pair of semantic troublemakers can often be seen at work—especially in other people's behavior. And in many cases they seem to work closely with the first pair.

For example, stereotypes (such as those which many foremen develop about shop stewards, and many shop stewards about foremen) may give rise to unrealistic assumptions. Unfriendly feelings may also push people into extremely unrealistic assumptions. And in acting on such assumptions, people sometimes express, and arouse, feelings that are wholly unfitting, because they don't correspond to current facts or meet the responsibilities that go with organizational roles.

This interplay of semantically undesirable habits can be seen, partly by inference, in a case such as that in which Foreman McCrorie discharged Shop Steward Harris. In that situation (and in many other disputes which have turned into arbitration cases) it's easy to see *afterward* how costly such inefficient language behavior can be. Here's another example.

WHAT DID HE MEAN: "TWICE"?

In comparing two subordinates—for purposes of performance appraisal—an assistant foreman said: "In my opinion, he [Parkman] is twice the man Renault is." [11]

Technically, by identifying his remark as an opinion, the assistant foreman got himself off the spot where semanticists would classify his remark as a "non-sense" statement.[12] But as a considered opinion on the relative merits of two employees, how much sense could his words make? And by looking below the surface words of that opinion, one may glimpse an assumption which is out of date in this day of scientific management. Doesn't it look as though that supervisor were taking it for granted that his personal feelings about subordinates should have a place in merit rating, and could suitably be made part of the appraisal process from which promotion, demotion, and other management actions follow?

Here's another case where unfitting feelings seem to have led people to act on unwarranted assumptions.

AN INCIDENT IN A TEXTILE FACTORY

Mr. Napoleon Plouffe was recalled from layoff to work on a combination job as can man and waste man.

[11] For a full report on that situation, see Paul Pigors and Charles A. Myers, *Personnel Administration: A Point of View and a Method*, 3d ed., pp. 495–501.

[12] According to semanticists, *a "non-sense" statement is one that gives an opinion about facts as though it were descriptive of facts.* A mental discipline which they recommend is that of straight reporting. In order to meet that specification, a report doesn't have to be accurate. But it does have to be unadorned with opinions and inferences.

Two days later, Mr. Stewart Wilson (still on layoff) filed a complaint. He claimed that because of his higher seniority rating, this work should have been given to him in preference to Mr. Plouffe.

* * * * * *

In order to understand what was going on there, you need a little background.

1. The duties of a waste man require more skill and experience than those of a can man, whose job was to operate an electric truck used to transport cans of sliver [13] (the fluffy roll of fiber from a carding machine).

2. At the time when Mr. Wilson was laid off (owing to lack of work) he was working (and classified) as a can man. But four years earlier he had been boss in the fiber mixing department. In satisfactorily filling requirements for that job, Mr. Wilson had demonstrated exceptional ability in differentiating various types and qualities of fiber. He was taken off that job only because management installed an automatic blending unit.

3. In actual length of service with the company, Mr. Plouffe had four years more seniority than Mr. Wilson. But at the time of this incident, Mr. Wilson was a member of the union's executive board. And that position entitled him to "super-seniority." [14]

The incident involving Mr. Plouffe and Mr. Wilson developed into an arbitration case. The issue was defined as: Which man was entitled to job preference? The positions of the contending parties were (roughly) as follows:

Management's case: Mr. Wilson "is classified as a can man." He has no experience on the vacuum tank. Hence he is not qualified for this job. His claim of super-seniority, and the mere assertion that he can "do a job on which he has no knowledge or experience, should not compel the company to risk its equipment and production or to endanger its personnel."

The Union's case: Mr. Wilson "is entitled to top seniority in his department." In view of this fact, and by reason of his "previous experience and known ability" in relation to the only difficult part of the combination job, he should have been given preference over Mr. Plouffe.

* * * * * *

The impartial arbitrator sustained the union, and Mr. Wilson got the job.

What was going on here? In this case, spoken words were correctly

[13] A waste man had to be able to operate a vacuum tank and to recognize different types of waste stock in order to separate them for salvage. Operating the vacuum tank was a job that could be learned in an hour. But months would be required to gain the experience needed to sort the fiber.

[14] Super-seniority (often granted to union officials as a result of collective bargaining) entitles a union officer—*during his term of office*—to claim a seniority rating higher than that of any rank-and-file member of the union employed in the same department.

handled (at the arbitration hearing) by management representatives who said that Mr. Wilson "is classified as a can man." No one said: "Mr. Wilson *is* a can man." But doesn't it look as though that were the assumption on which management built its case? Prejudice (against a union officer) may have been partly responsible for pushing management representatives into a position where an arbitrator had to rule against them. They knew the facts which were used by the union to support, and win, the other side of the case. How could anything less serious than a bad case of selective perception have led management representatives to assert that Mr. Wilson had "no knowledge or experience" of the job in question?

A brief example may illustrate the idea that unfitting feelings can make trouble even when they're not put into words.

THIS LATIN WAS "GREEK"

In arguing a case at an arbitration hearing, a corporation lawyer strongly emphasized the importance of established principles and of a previous understanding between the parties arrived at in a similar dispute. In doing so, he repeatedly used the legal terms *stare decises* and *res judicata*. The union president, trying to follow the argument closely, was balked by this technical language. And he became increasingly restive as he sensed that the lawyer was speaking with telling effect. Finally, he leaned toward the management representative who was nearest to him, and asked in a loud whisper: "Who *are* these guys Starry and Reese? And why should *they* decide this case?"

In that situation, language whose technical meaning was incomprehensible to at least one participant carried an annoying message: "It makes no difference to 'them' if we can't follow their argument. 'They' don't think enough of us to care what we think." Have you ever been in a situation where a feeling of indifference toward you was communicated to you (perhaps unintentionally) because other people were talking over your head?

But feelings don't have to be unfriendly in order to be unfitting. As the next case shows, even kindly feelings can make trouble when teamed up with unrealistic assumptions.

CAN A KEY WORKER REMAIN "ANONYMOUS"?

An Incident in the Life of Reilly

Mr. Weir (plant manager) was walking through the lobby, while Mrs. Reilly (a production clerk) was using the public telephone.

MRS. REILLY: Oh, Mr. Weir, would you like to talk with Pat, yourself?

MR. WEIR: I certainly would.... Well, Pat, you've let us down badly, *again.* Just when *are* you coming back?

MR. REILLY (with rather unclear enunciation): I'll be there tomorrow, for *sure.*

MR. WEIR: All right. See that you are.

When Patrick Reilly did not show up the next day either, the plant superin-

tendent, the plant manager, and the personnel administrator talked the case over. They agreed that Pat should *again* be discharged and that this time he should not be rehired. But they also agreed that before taking such drastic disciplinary action, they should clear with Mr. George Appley (the company president), "in view of his past interest in this case."

* * * * * *

If you were in Mr. Appley's organizational role, what might you decide to do? Naturally, without knowing any of the background, you're in no position to make a rational decision. You need to be briefed.

Abbreviated report on the case

1. As George Appley, you are president of a company that manufactures commercial filters.

2. Patrick Reilly was first employed in your plant thirteen years ago. He has been there—with interruptions, one of which was for military service—ever since.

3. Reilly's employment record is a picture of rises and falls. He rose to the position of first-line supervisor. Now (in May, 1953) he is a lead-man in his department and also a "repair and maintenance mechanic." When at work, Mr. Reilly has demonstrated exceptional ability. And in many interviews with members of management, he has made effective use of his personal charm. His demotion and (in April, 1947) his discharge were for excessive absence in consequence of heavy drinking.

4. During his employment with the company, records show that the life of Reilly has repeatedly run through the following cycle: *Absence* (unexcused and without notification to management) usually for a week or more at a time. *Return* to work. *Interviews* with members of management, initiated in the hope of helping Pat to straighten himself out. (Such interviews have been characterized, on Pat's part, by signs of penitence, new plans, and solemn promises to reform. More than once during such heart-to-heart talks with Pat and also with his wife, it has been admitted that the excuse of illness—offered after an absence—was a euphemism for the after-effects of heavy drinking.) *Regular attendance* (usually continuing for months). Then—without warning—another *Lost Week End.*

5. Your personal welfare work in this case began three years ago when Pat was about to be discharged again. The referral to you was not only because of your position as company president, but also because you had been interested and successful in curing another alcoholic employee. In your first counseling interview with Pat, you persuaded him to attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. After this plan petered out, Mrs. Evans (your personnel administrator) made arrangements for Pat to be treated at a hospital clinic. These visits have gradually become less regular, but they have not been entirely discontinued.

6. A few key facts about the seven days immediately before the incident are these:

a. On Thursday, April 30, extensive rearrangements of machinery were begun

in the department where Pat is employed. Careful planning made it possible to shut down the machines that had to be moved, without interrupting other operations in which over two-thirds of the plant personnel were engaged.

b. Pat knew that he was a key man in these arrangements and had agreed to put in overtime on Saturday. But—

c. On Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday—as well as on Thursday, May 7 (today)—Pat failed to show up. On none of these days did he give any advance notice of absence, although each day a different excuse (having to do with health) was presented by his wife, who came to work as usual.

All things considered, what seems to be at issue? Well, that's the story —in brief. As you review this sorry picture, how would you define the issue? Do you see it like this: "What more effective method can we find for helping poor Pat?" Or would you put it this way: "Of all the ungrateful So and So's! Does he think he can get away with murder?" Or do you feel inclined to take an organizational view: "Are we justified in continuing to subject our organization to this kind of strain?"

A Semantic Skill: Interpreting Meanings in Contexts

To define an issue is to make an interpretation of meaning. All of us constantly do that. And every normal adult has some skill as an interpreter. In fact, much of the time interpreting is done so intuitively that people don't realize they are exercising any skill. But anyone who notices what he does, when he derives a meaning, is in a position to recognize that meanings "are not *in* words." Nor are they *in* events. "They are in *us*." Meaning is a mental product. When working toward meaning, a person works in several intermeshing contexts, such as: (1) *his own personality*—in which powerful forces are exerted by established habits, mind sets, and preconditioning attitudes; (2) *ideas, feelings, and purposes* that are in his mind at the time; (3) *his previous experience*—not wholly separate from his personality, but not precisely the same either; and often (4) *the verbal setting* in which a given item comes to his notice.

Anyone who wants to increase his skill in interpreting what other people mean, and to keep track of the way meanings shift in his own mind, might well consider the implications of the following statement: "No word ever has exactly the same meaning twice." [15] One reason why the meaning of any word inevitably changes in each person's mind is that everyone's personality keeps changing. And no word can have *precisely* the same meaning for any two people because individual differences of personality and of experience make a difference in what a word connotes.

And now for some case illustrations.

Our first example is partly hypothetical. It shows how the meaning of a plain, matter-of-fact word like "sleet" can be affected by contexts of

[15] Hayakawa, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

personality and of the ideas, emotions, and intentions in a person's mind at a given time.

What Does Sleet Mean?

The word sleet *denotes* freezing rain. But here are a few of the different *connotations* which sleet might have to different persons on the same day in the same building—for instance, in an apartment house on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

To an elevator man, going up and down in the center of the building, the freezing rain outside might have little meaning. As one elevator man said: "Lady, it don't make no difference to me. I don't even see it." But to a tenant high up on the twenty-fifth floor, overlooking Central Park, sleet might have an almost miraculous quality, transforming shrubs and trees into a shimmering, translucent fairyland. To a visitor looking at the same scene but thinking of her own trees (at her country place)—sleet might seem a menace. It would threaten what she loves. To someone about to start off in an automobile, freezing rain could represent another kind of risk. While to anyone concerned with an airplane pilot, or with any of his passengers, sleet can connote deadly peril.

Such Preconditioning Forces Are Likely to Operate under Cover

In many cases it seems clear that people don't realize what's happening in their minds when they are affected by subjective forces. Take the case of the supervisor who identified troubleshooters as troublemakers, labeling them all as gremlins. He probably didn't suspect that his opinion was a highly colored derivative of special experiences. A similar case is that of the assistant foreman who declared: "Parkman is twice the man he [Renault] is." Do you think he would have made such a statement officially if he had been aware of the extent to which his feelings had bested his rational judgment? And the powerful effect of feelings, when reinforced by unconscious assumptions, was illustrated in the situation where Mr. Appley became emotionally involved in the life of Reilly. Mr. Appley was a seasoned executive. Unless feelings had beclouded his judgment, does it seem likely that he would have kept Reilly on—as a key man—after years of experience had made it plain that repeated absence (without warning) was characteristic of Reilly's way of life?

Effects of Experience [16]

A person's experience is a context which inevitably affects his interpretation of whatever he perceives.

Take the word "blue." How would you convey the meaning of that word

[16] We use the word "experience" to denote what happens *in* a person (what he perceives and secretes), and not merely what happens *to* him.

(in the sense of a quality of color) to a person who had been sightless from birth? Or take the word "blind." Without having been subjected to a life sentence of sightlessness, who could possibly appreciate what that word might mean, for instance, to a person like Helen Keller? We can read the words that she and others have written about what it is to be blind. But the very fact that we can read them—with our eyes—shuts us off from an experience which could yield realistic understanding.

Other illustrations of how *in*experience can affect meaning can be glimpsed in the experiments that children try with language. For example, when one's experience (as a man of the world) hasn't yet included owning any suits, it may seem natural to say: "Mother, I've learned a new thing to do with cards. I can arrange them in coats." And an adult (familiar with multiple meanings) can follow the process that led to the comment, about a picture of a stag (four-footed variety): "Those things on his head are trumpets."

But the limiting effects of experience aren't associated only with being a child—in years. Being in the position of a foreigner can make a person feel as much at sea sometimes as young children necessarily are all the time. Haven't you ever felt confused when you were abroad? Or perhaps you have been more forcibly struck by the misapprehensions that overseas visitors seem to have about life in the U.S.A. Here's an instance.

A Norwegian, after watching his first game of American football, reportedly summed up his chief impression by saying: "The umpire was always running around looking for hankies." (Presumably no one had told him that our umpires drop handkerchiefs to mark the spot where they have noticed a violation of the rules.)

In a sense, each of us is a foreigner in relation to any kind of activity that we haven't experienced. Louis Armstrong laid that on the line when he said (in answer to the question "What *is* New Orleans jazz?"): "Man, when you got to ask what it is, you'll never get to know." [17]

In considering meaning, one can't realistically separate the *context of life experience* from *verbal contexts*. But when we get into verbal contexts, we come up against certain special difficulties. One such difficulty is introduced by multiple meanings (the fact that one word may denote different things).

Working with Meanings, in Verbal Contexts

Adults who are at home in a language are often unaware that they are exercising skill when they select one meaning from several possibilities. For instance, merely by glancing at (or listening to) other words used in the same setting, we know at once whether the word "spectacles" de-

[17] For context, see *The Great Satchmo,* Columbia LP record.

notes things looked at or looked through; whether "tumblers" are glasses (for drinking out of) or acrobats; and whether a "buffet" is a cold meal or a hard blow. Similarly, a person can instantly attach the appropriate meaning to "aired" when he finds out whether blankets, grievances, or news bulletins are getting that treatment.

So what? Perhaps few people would quarrel with the statement that normal adults constantly exercise some degree of semantic skill when they interpret meanings. But many of us have often wished that we were more alert and more skillful as interpreters. Anyone who wants to take it from there may find that case analysis can help him. Studying cases (and listening to case discussions) can provide many opportunities to notice different kinds and different shades of meaning in other minds. And practical techniques for working in different contexts can be learned by doing the kind of thinking—about a dispute case—that is expected of an impartial arbitrator.

Arbitration: A Special Opportunity for Working in Contexts

The work of arbitrators may not usually be regarded as advanced work in semantics. But if an arbitrator is to measure up to his job, he must have considerable skill as an interpreter in contexts. In working out his award, an arbitrator is necessarily working in different kinds of context, all related to the nub of the dispute (the issue) which he is called upon to settle. In every case, some of the key questions for him are these: How many kinds of context need to be considered, because they are relevant to the issue submitted to arbitration? And what is the relative weight of each?

The existing labor agreement is one kind of context that an arbitrator is obligated to consider. (And if any clause in that contract seems clearly applicable and clear-cut in its language, he is bound by it.) But an arbitrator is expected to interpret any contract clause "within the meaning of the contract as a whole." And if the contract is silent on some points or if an applicable clause is not clearly worded, other written documents—such as organization policies or management procedures—may prove decisive. Or perhaps accepted practices or some previous "understanding" will tip the scale. Or again, the decision may hinge on some principle of justice.

Two greatly abbreviated examples may suggest how a person can develop semantic skills by working on cases in the way that befits an impartial arbitrator.

A CASE OF "INSUBORDINATION"?

In a dispute between a union and a management, the following issue was submitted to arbitration: "Was the company justified in giving Mr. John Angel a three-day disciplinary layoff for insubordination?

Here's a brief summary of two statements about preceding developments.

Management's case: On Tuesday, November 3, Mr. Angel failed to report for work. He had not even sent a message to say that he would not be there. This behavior was "inexcusable" because on Monday his supervisor had plainly told him that, owing to the absence of other workers, there would be acute need for his services on that Tuesday. The supervisor had also warned Mr. Angel that, in view of this fact, he would be disciplined if he failed to report for work the next day.

The Union's case presented a different picture of some of the same "facts," and was buttressed by statements from two other contexts, as follows:

Mr. Angel is not only an employee of the company. He is also a precinct delegate and chairman of the Political Action Committee in his local Union. On November 3 his services were called for in connection with a civic election. On the preceding Friday, the Union president and the department steward had "informed" Mr. Angel's supervisor that Mr. Angel would "have to be absent" on the following Tuesday. "Permission" for this absence was "granted" on Friday. But on Monday (owing to an upset in plans for getting a substitute) the permission was "withdrawn."

As a clincher for their case, Union officers cited the following provision in the existing labor agreement (Article VI on "Leaves of Absence," subsection 1-*a* on "Union Business"): "Employees elected to a public office, or elected or appointed to a labor office or as a delegate to any labor activity shall be granted a leave of absence for their term of office."

What words, and what contexts seem decisive? If you were asked to render an award in that case, you would need more information. And you would naturally check every statement for yourself. But even with nothing more to go on than is given here, isn't it evident that semantic analysis is needed in such a case? And offhand, doesn't it seem that when in a contractual agreement, a comprehensive word like "any" is teamed up with such an explicit directive as "shall," a union delegate who is absent on official union business (after having given due notice) cannot properly be disciplined for "insubordination"?

In the next example, there was no difference of opinion as to the meaning of any clause in the labor agreement. But there were different interpretations of the *meaning of actions* in a given context.

"INSUBORDINATION," OR "DISCRIMINATION"?

In brief, the situation was this: A worker had asked for two days off, one day before a week-end holiday and one day afterward. The request had been refused. But the worker took off, regardless. When he got back, he found that he had been discharged. To management this was a clear case of insubordination.

Even Union officials did not deny that the worker had put himself in the wrong. But they based their case primarily on action by other workers, and on management decisions in those cases. The record supported their contention that other workers in the plant, also absent without permission, had not been disciplined in any way. The Union also produced evidence to support the charge that the Manager had been "laying for this worker."

If management representatives could not disprove the union's charge of "discrimination," might not an impartial arbitrator have to render an award in favor of the union?

Another Language Skill: Getting a Fitting Degree of Precision

A second practical skill consists in using words (to think, read, write, speak, or listen) with the degree of precision needed (and warranted) in a given setting. Does this mean that the more explicit and tight-fitting the language, the better? Not always. But our first pair of examples illustrates the idea that a Manager can sometimes promote economy by being accurate and specific.

"TAKE ONE" OR "DO NOT REMOVE!"?

The following account was given to us, in 1959, by an English friend in answering the question "Have you any supermarkets in England?"

> Yes, we have a number. One was started about a year ago in a town near us. But it didn't do very well at first. It didn't have baby prams as yours do. Instead there were baskets, piled near the door. Over them was a sign that said: "Take One." By the time the manager noticed how many people had taken the invitation literally, he had lost quite a bit of money.

A few days after hearing this story, we noticed the following sign, posted near the door of an A & P store in a town near where we live.

> NOTICE
>
> Shopping carts are not to be removed beyond the parking lot. These are for your convenience and we are sure you will understand the necessity for this regulation.

What Kind of Language for Orders?

Offhand, one might say that in giving orders it is always desirable to speak as explicitly as possible. Does the following example prove that general proposition—or merely illustrate it, in one case?

"BETTER CLEAN UP AROUND HERE"

A foreman spotted a dangerous accumulation of oily waste around a machine. He said casually to the machinist, "Better clean up around here"—meaning that the man should deposit the waste in the trashcan. Instead, the machinist stopped production for an hour while he walked down to the maintenance department, borrowed a broom and dustpan, and meticulously swept the floor.[18]

Looked at by hindsight, one might criticize that foreman's order as too vague. But here's another example which suggests that in some situations an order can be inefficient because it is too explicit.

"GET IT OUT RIGHT AWAY!"

In a factory, a Manager said to a foreman: "Tom, I want this job given priority over everything in the shop. Get it out right away!"

In this case, a less cut-and-dried order might have been more fitting, especially since the order-receiver was a foreman. As it happened, the foreman had in mind certain facts not taken into account by the Manager. Being a high-caliber person, "Tom" stuck his neck out, by asking: "Would it be all right to let this job wait for about three hours? Then one of my machines will be free, and we won't have to lose time taking a job down and setting it up again."

A partly conditional order would have invited this use of judgment by a foreman. For instance, the Manager might have said: "Tom, please put this special order through as soon as you can. It must be finished by tonight." If the order *as given* had been literally obeyed, time would have been wasted. But in order to save time and money for the company, a foreman had to risk a snub by putting himself in the awkward position of questioning an order from the Manager.

THE TIME FACTOR MAY MAKE A DIFFERENCE

When orders are directed toward the future, as all standing orders are, flexibility sometimes fits requirements better than tight-fitting language.[19] The following example illustrates that point.

In a telephone company during a recession, unconditional standing orders had been issued forbidding supervisors to authorize overtime under any circumstances. On one occasion, a cable splicer was working in a wet manhole on an international toll cable. The cable ran through marshy territory near the sea. About an hour before quitting time, the cable splicer realized that he could not finish the job within the regular working day. He asked the supervising

[18] Frank E. Fisher and Lydia Strong, "Communication: 'X Factor' in the Management Job," pp. 18–19, in M. Joseph Dooher (ed.) and Vivienne Marquis (assoc. ed.), *Effective Communication on the Job*.

[19] Of course, some standing orders, such as "No Smoking Here," may need to be stated, interpreted, and enforced, inflexibly.

foreman whether he should stay overtime to finish the work. The supervising foreman, having no authority to grant overtime, telephoned the supervisor of cable splicing. The latter was unwilling to take the responsibility for making an exception to an unconditional order whose importance had been strongly impressed upon him. He, in turn, telephoned his superior, the superintendent of construction, who told him to use his discretion. This "decision" was transmitted down the line to the supervising foreman, who still feared the consequences of acceding to his better judgment. He told the worker to wrap the splice securely and leave it to be finished in the morning. During the night, the rising tide entered the manhole, penetrated the wrappings, and spoiled the cable. The toll line was tied up for several days and considerable damage was done. Thus order giving proved inefficient both in the short run and the long run. Money was wasted, not saved. And authority was weakened at three levels.[20]

Orders and rules are two kinds of directives that need to be issued in organizations. What about policies? [21]

Flexible Language for Policies

The purpose of a policy statement is far removed from that of a specific order (which concerns physical behavior), or of an inflexible rule. The purpose of unconditional orders and rules is matched by inflexible words such as: "always," "never," "no one," "everyone," "must," and "must not." Such language makes it clear that the situation permits no deviation by anyone from a plan that has been worked out, and is spelled out, in detail. But an organization policy can be used as a flexible, long-term guide for decisions by people who have some authority to speak and to act for the organization. Therefore, tight-fitting language would be inappropriate. Policies can suitably be stated in flexible language such as "management will favorably consider . . . ," "Management intends . . . ," "We shall encourage . . . ," ". . . shall be considered as a ground for" (disciplinary action, for instance).[22]

Admittedly, many statements that are issued as policies are expressed in the language of rules. But if the special purposes and functions of organization policies were consistently expressed in flexible language, there might be less confusion and more agreement in the minds of people who are expected to interpret and apply such policies.

It Takes Two to Communicate

The examples given so far stress the responsibility of the person who sends out a message to make his meaning clear and to clothe it in lan-

[20] Pigors and Myers, *op. cit.*

[21] In Chap. 4, pp. 85–86, we listed three specifications for an organization policy, if that word is used in referring to a guide for management decisions.

[22] For a fine commentary on the semantics of organization policies, see Alfred Dwight Sheffield, "Making Sense with Statements of Company Policy."

guage that fits the situation. Is it always possible to meet either of those specifications? Of course it isn't. The trouble is: *one important element in the situation is partly unknowable.* And that element is the mind (or minds) toward which the message is directed. However, people who are experienced in coping with misunderstandings have learned much about dealing with the (partly) unknowable. Here's a case in point.

WHAT WILL A READER READ INTO A STATEMENT?

In a manuscript to be used for courses in management development, an editor took the precaution of deleting all references to learning, case students, and study groups. His theory was that any such words would arouse resentment in any supervisor because they would suggest (connote): "sent back to school." The editor also consistently substituted the term "group member" for "member." This change, too, was made with a view to the context in which words would be read. In the minds of the authors, "member" denoted "member of the conference group." But the editor thought that, in management experience today, member has come to mean "union member." He therefore feared that this term might set up hostile reactions.

Writers who give priority to their intended meaning might say that such editorial precautions are far-fetched. But editors know that a word can pick up a loaded meaning (in the mind of a reader) because of unpleasant experiences which give it a special connotation.

AN UNUSUAL CASE

A cooperative effort to prevent misunderstandings (of technical terms in a factory) was made by members of management at the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and officers of Lodge 727 of the International Association of Machinists. Management representatives in the wage and salary department prepared a glossary [23] of key terms used in "technical and office job descriptions." These definitions were then issued to first-line supervisors and to shop stewards at the same time. Top management and the union also issued a "Joint Policy Statement," explaining the purpose of this glossary, and how it was to be used.

Did that preventive work eliminate all misunderstanding at Lockheed from then on? No, it didn't. In fact, we first read about the glossary in a report on an arbitration case in which representatives of management and of the union at Lockheed differed as to what a job description meant.

Feelings Enter In

Many cases where inefficient use of language occasions serious difficulties might be cited to illustrate the following ideas: (1) One reason why

[23] For excerpts from this glossary, see Appendix C, following Case VII, *The "Outside" Inspectors.*

it's difficult to avoid misunderstandings is that circumstances sometimes make people so sensitive that only precision language fits their case. (2) Emotions and expectations may give words a twist that wasn't intended by the person who first used them. (3) In a situation where feelings run high and run in different directions (in different minds), it may prove impossible to agree as to which words aptly describe the situation. (4) Many of us suffer from a tendency to grab any old word even in describing something which touches our own feelings. When we do that, we can scarcely hope even to express our own thoughts, let alone to make comments that fit the situation.

Those ideas may be seen in the next four examples.

WERE THEY "DEMOTED" OR "BROKEN"?

In a factory, the second shift had been eliminated in one department (to adjust to a sharp drop in orders). This meant that salaried foremen, as well as hourly rated workers, lost their former jobs. To protect the employment of the salaried foremen, management had "set them back"—temporarily—to the status of hourly rated workers, putting them on the first shift in other departments.

Such replacement transfers indicate a fitting concern for supervisory personnel. The term "set-back foreman" is technically fitting because of what it denotes. And to a former supervisor who is trying to adjust (temporarily) to a lower rated job, what such a title *connotes* can be even more important. Its meaning-for-him might be threefold: pointing to the *fact* that his loss of status has come about through no fault of his own, the *hope* that his downward transfer will be only temporary, and the *idea* that his proven ability and experience are still officially recognized (even though his temporary assignment is not commensurate with his potential value to the company).

Naturally, top management must always sanction the arrangement whereby foremen are set back. And job titles aren't secrets. Therefore, how fitting are the following comments which were made by executives: "We had to demote our second-shift foremen." "To adjust to the cut-back, we had to break twenty foremen."

Is this precision language? Or does it seem to express some degree of "inattention and indifference" to technical arrangements and human needs? And suppose a set-back foreman realized that Managers were using language which implies that there is no significant difference between being set back, demoted, and broken? Would it be unreasonable for him to feel some resentment and to fear that he might never stage a comeback?

In the next case example, an official title didn't fit either the facts (of the job) or the natural expectations of the job holder.

WHAT DID THE TERM "ASSISTANT" MEAN?

During the Second World War, a secretary was reclassified as "secretary-assistant." (The idea was that the higher status represented by this new title would justify—to the Wage and Hour Board—a salary increase.)

The secretary-assistant was delighted. She took it for granted that this reclassification to a new and higher paid job was a step toward further promotion. (Pleasant remarks had been made when she was told about the new title and the salary increase. But no explanation had been offered.) Following through on her expectation that she was on her way toward becoming an administrative assistant, the "secretary-assistant" made various attempts to demonstrate her readiness and ability to understudy her immediate superior. But whenever she did so, he politely indicated that she was stepping out of line. Gradually, it was borne in upon her that she was still expected to spend all her time on the routine work that she had been doing before—as secretary. Her supervisor's behavior told her that in spite of the new title, she was stuck in the same old job.

A few months later, she expressed her mounting frustration by giving notice of her decision to resign.

A student of semantics might see this case as an illustration of the idea that "The word isn't the thing." (Calling a secretary a secretary-assistant doesn't make her one.) Semantically alerted students of social relations might chiefly be impressed with another idea, the evident need for supervisors to be precise (in technical matters such as job titles) and consistent (in what they think, say, and do) when directing subordinates.

DID THEY "INTERVENE" OR "INVADE"?

In November, 1956, strongly opposed feelings about history-in-the-making were indicated by the terms "intervened" and "invaded"—applied to the landing of French and British forces in Egypt. World opinion, as crystallized in the UN, characterized this military action as "invasion," and condemned it as such. The French and British governments bowed to that verdict. But they made it evident that they did not share that view.

In defense of their "direct action," French and British writers stressed the idea that this "intervention" was justified, and even necessary, as *pre*vention designed to avert military aggression by Egypt against Israel, and to safeguard the Suez Canal.[24]

In the closing months of 1956, many newspaper accounts and editorials used the terms "intervention" and "invasion" indiscriminately. But on March 3, 1957, an editorial in the *New York Times* (written in a manner consistent with straight

[24] Incidentally, no definition of "aggression" or "aggressor" could be agreed upon during months of discussion at the UN. The attempt to define these terms was abandoned in 1957. Was Israel the aggressor when her troops swarmed over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, starting on October 29, 1956? Or had Nasser's threats, discriminatory action, and repeated forays against Israel, before that time, constituted aggression by Egypt?

reporting) contained this language: "... the Anglo-French *assault* ... British and French troops *occupied* the northern end of the Suez Canal ... Israel announced her forces would pull out promptly from the last of the ground they had *overrun.*" [Our italics]

"REBELS" OR "PATRIOTS"?

The Hungarian revolution (in November–December, 1956) was another event which made feelings flame high in many parts of the world. In the U.S.A., many people were so stirred by the martyrdom of Hungarians that they begged the President to intervene, even at the risk of starting a world war. Yet reporters and commentators in the American press referred to the Hungarians as "rebels," and even (sometimes) as "reactionaries," [25] thus adopting the same terms that were used by Communist writers. How well does the word rebel seem to fit, in the title of a sympathetic article headlined: "Hungarian Women Mourn Their Rebel Dead?"

What about Our Own Language?

Analyzing remote cases can be a useful start toward working on one's own language. But a different kind of material is needed in order to follow up such a start—by case method. The case reports which can be most useful to anyone, at the stage of applied semantics, are those which enable a person to get the goods on himself. Before he can decide what changes he might want to make in his ways with language, he needs to analyze material which can give him some insight into the *effects of his language on his own mind, and on other people.*

Such reports can be made available in a study group if members are willing to take turns in keeping track of what is said and done during case discussions. In our groups it has been standard practice for everyone to write and to study this kind of report. And in our opinion an important opportunity for learning from such reports consists in the fact that the reporters are not experts, either as psychological observers or as English majors. The comments made and the language used are characteristic of what these reporters see (at close range) and what they say (when they speak and write naturally).

As we mentioned before, relatively few of our case students have shown serious interest in analyzing their own language. But some of them have become aware that the same semantic troublemakers and the same skills that can be dimly discerned in remote cases can be clearly seen through the medium of reports *written* by members of the study group.

A few sample quotations may serve to make that general statement specific.

[25] A few writers used the term "patriots," and later the phrase "freedom fighters" became generally accepted.

Excerpts from Student Reports

As background for the following material you need to know that in the Incident Process (which we use for case analysis during group discussion) almost all the information about each case is brought out by questions directed to the person who presents the case. In order to make these excerpts as nearly self-explanatory as possible, we have limited our selection to comments on "repeat questions" and "follow-up" questions.

1. Only 33 questions, or 62.3% of the total were *considered effective*. As the Table [26] shows, 20 of the remaining questions were *classified as extraneous and repetitious*.

2. The really *distressing* point is the number of *repeats*.

3. We probably all agree that *repeating a question is inefficient*. In our discussion *it appeared that the only "unnecessary" questions* came during summarizing, when those who asked *were probably thinking out loud* instead of remembering quietly.

4. Even the matter of "repeat questions" is *probably less simple than most of us have assumed*. For example, in *Table I*, note the spread of the last 7 questions, covering all six of the areas that had been explored. *Is* such a final re-coverage *necessarily* repetitive? Or *is it, perhaps, an effective device* to clinch key points before taking the next step toward decision?

5. As the chart indicates, the questioning *did not seem to follow any pattern*. While immediate follow-ups were made in 8 instances, *this type of questioning* in *half of these instances was made by the same person who asked the original question*.

6. *Would* the number of follow-up questions and the number of repeat questions *have any relationship?*

7. *Is it realistic to take it for granted* that when one question *"follows" another* (because it comes immediately afterward, and on the same topic) this second question *is a proof of teamwork in listening?* When you were an Observer, haven't you ever *thought you noticed* signs of rapt attention, only to discover (when that "listener" spoke) that he had *apparently been tensed to spring in* with a question on some other topic?

8. . . . Of even greater importance is the fact that *in 26 instances an established area of questioning was carried on by other members*, giving as many as seven succeeding questions in the same category. *If this technique could be developed further, fact-finding would become more efficient*. Unless points are entirely cleared up as they arise, *partial facts dangle in air, while members are forced to turn their attention* to new areas of questioning.

9. It is more common to find some questions following up, but separated by

[26] This table (referred to in comment 4 as "Table I," and in comment 5 as a "chart") is a standard feature of each Observer's report. It shows the sequence and total number of all questions asked about the case, each question being identified according to who asked it, and all questions being classified according to topics.

To keep this section short, we refrain from making comments, merely indicating by italics certain words or phrases which seem to us significant.

another one. . . . *It is suggested that as much as possible the members should try* to finish one general topic before beginning a new one. By that way, the *repetitions would disappear,* the number of questions in each field *would decrease,* and *the ideas would be clearer.* As a matter of fact, *it is a real difficulty for each member to keep attention* to every question, when they are so numerous, so various, and so quickly answered.

What did you see there? Such small bits may not seem to add up to much, especially if you have never listened to case discussions where information was brought out by questioning. And certainly what you see in that material, or in any case material, would be different from what we see. But didn't you notice a little labeling, and also some *efforts to get beyond labels?* Did you find any indication of *stereotyped thinking,* but also evidence of *firsthand perceptions?* (We specially like the expression "partial facts dangle in air.") Don't those comments show quite a range *in the degree of precision attempted and attained?* And doesn't each of them illustrate *interpreting in a multiple context?*

Our next and last example is taken from a situation that is far from the conference room where action was reported by case students. But there, too, one may recognize that careless habits (of labeling and stereotyping) can get in the way when people try to communicate, and that language skills are needed wherever understanding is at stake.

SUMMARY EXAMPLE: WHY ISN'T A SHERPA A "COOLIE"?

Perhaps the term "Sherpa" is meaningless, to most people. But anyone who reads the *Autobiography of Tenzing of Everest* [27] soon discovers that "Sherpa" denotes a tribe of Himalayan hillmen. According to Tenzing himself:

. . . in most people's minds, [today] the name Sherpa is the same as mountaineer.

In the beginning, as novices, we were little more than load-bearers—what in the East, for long ages have been called coolies. "Coolie" is a name that Asians no longer like. It has a connotation so menial and slave-like that it is greatly resented if it is used by Westerners. Among the Sherpas, however, this is no longer a problem, for it is a long time since anyone has even thought, let alone spoken, of us by that name. "The local coolies were paid off," you may sometimes read, "but the Sherpas went on."

This is not to say that we are not still load-carriers. Indeed it is part of our pride that we carry them bigger and farther and higher than any other men in the world.

Nor is this all that we do. Over the years we have learned . . . to help in other ways, such as in the finding of routes, the cutting of steps, the handling of ropes, and the choosing of campsites. Also, we consider it our duty to take care

[27] Tenzing of Everest, *Tiger of the Snows: The Autobiography of Tenzing of Everest,* with James Ramsey Ullman. The following excerpt is condensed from pp. 118–120.

of our sahibs. We cook for them, bring them their tea, look after their equipment, and see that they are comfortable in their tents. And we do these things not in the spirit of servants but of good companions. In return for this there have been rewards. Our pay has slowly increased. We are treated with courtesy and respect. The rank of Tiger has been established to honor those who go highest. . . . All this is good and pleasing. . . . But the real reward, as it is the real reason, for what we do is simpler and deeper. It is that we are performing the work we want to do—that we were born to do—and that we love.

RECAP OF PART TWO

LOOKING INTO TYPICAL FACTORS

In Chapter 3, we considered factors that we call typical of any social situation, because we find them wherever people are doing things together. These are: (1) *human nature* (personal feelings, human needs, personality factors, individual attitudes, group responses, and that sort of thing); (2) *the technical factor* (methods, procedures, techniques of doing things, technical requirements, standards of efficiency, and so forth); and (3) *space-time conditions and relationships* (such as the place where, the time when, duration, and sequence).

Case II was a report on a situation where a participant used our analytical system as a way to get oriented and to decide what to do in an unfamiliar situation.

TAKING AND FUSING DIFFERENT ANGLES OF VIEW

In Chapter 4, we suggested that a person can learn to think realistically about social situations by forming the habit of "getting around" with his mind. For example, if he starts as an outsider—perhaps as a case student—he needs to *get into* the situation with his imagination and his powers of appreciation. He can't even begin to understand what people in that situation were able to do until he (1) has got an accurate and detailed picture of "facts that 'were so'"; and (2) can appreciate something of what the situation *looked like, and felt like, to the people who were caught up in it.*

On the other hand, when a person is inside some situation—especially if he is emotionally involved—what he needs, before he can make rational decisions, is to *get out* with his mind. Case method can help a person to become more objective, especially when habits of case analysis are developed to the point of case-mindedness. For instance, the habit of envisaging actual situations *as cases* can familiarize a person with what may be called *an organizational view.* As one thinks about people in cases, it is evident that every member in an organization is obligated to make decisions, and to regulate his behavior, in accordance with policies, procedures, and practices which have been accepted for the organization as a whole.

Another way for an insider to get beyond a strictly I-view is to recognize that in any social situation, *there is more than one inside view.* If an insider actually were a case student (trying to learn from that case, in retrospect), he would probably have no difficulty in recognizing that (1) no one person's feelings and needs could reasonably be regarded as all-important; and (2) in the situation as a whole, all the feelings and needs of all the people involved were only part of what was at stake there.

To the extent that a person can see himself as one of the people in a case situation, he already has some perspective. Having got that far, he may be able to get farther, taking *a long view* and asking himself: What is at stake for all the participants in "that" case—over the long haul?

Case III showed what happened when a young engineer acted on several unrealistic assumptions, thus precipitating an incident to which a machinist reacted by quitting without notice. That case offered illustrations of ideas considered in Chapter 5.

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS IN CASE STUDY

In the chapter on General Semantics, we made a case for incorporating a few ideas, developed by students of semantics, into a compound method of analyzing social relationships. We used a number of specific examples to illustrate two pairs of troublemaking habits and two everyday skills of language.

The principal ideas presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 can now be brought together—operationally—by applying this three-part method of analysis to another case.

CASE IV. A LAST-MINUTE REQUEST FOR TIME OFF

The Ordway Incident

Time: November 23, 1955, about 9:30 A.M. on the day before Thanksgiving. (The employee is scheduled to go on duty at 10:00 this morning.)

Place: A psychiatric hospital, the office of the Assistant Director of Nursing Service.

Persons immediately concerned: Mrs. Baker, Assistant Director of Nursing Service; Mrs. Speer, head nurse (day shift) in the disturbed ward; Miss Ordway, attendant in the disturbed ward.

* * * * * *

MRS. SPEER (over the telephone): Oh, Mrs. Baker, I've just sent Miss Ordway over to see you. I referred her to you because Miss Thayer [1] is off duty today.

[1] Miss Thayer is supervisor of nurses. Any scheduling question that cannot be settled by a head nurse is ordinarily referred to the supervisor of nurses.

MRS. BAKER: What's the trouble?

MRS. SPEER: It's this. . . . I've been having quite a time with Miss Ordway. She has tomorrow off. But now she is insisting on having Friday, Saturday, and Sunday off, too.

MRS. BAKER: Well, wait a minute. Do we owe her three extra days?

MRS. SPEER: Yes, we do. I checked that on the personnel time sheets. But I reminded her that it's too late now to do anything about it for this week end. I asked her if there was any reason why she *had* to have these three days off, all of a sudden.

MRS. BAKER: Was there? Is someone ill in her family?

MRS. SPEER: No. But she hasn't been home since June. You know, coming from Vermont, it takes her a day to get home and another to get back again. So I told her that if nothing goes wrong, we can arrange for her to get off next week end. But. . . .

MRS. BAKER: Here she is now. I'll talk to her and call you back. (To Miss Ordway): Well, Miss Ordway, what is it?

MISS ORDWAY (with a rush, and in a tone of urgency): Mrs. Baker, I'm off tomorrow. And I'm on for the week end. But I have three days coming to me. So I want Friday, Saturday, and Sunday off.

MRS. BAKER: But Miss Ordway, you've been assigned to ward duty. And we're counting on you for the holiday week end.

MISS ORDWAY: I don't care. I need the time off to be with my family.

* * * * * *

Suggestion for Case Analysis

If you're interested in trying out our system of case analysis, why not apply it to this case? In order to do so in a way that approximates real life, you might try to imagine yourself in the position of the Assistant Director of Nursing Service. How might you deal with this Incident? And what further action, if any, might you take in this situation?

(We're not suggesting that you attempt to take on Mrs. Baker's personality, but merely that you try to imagine yourself as being in her organizational role at this juncture. And in asking what you "might" decide to do, we mean *at best*. Using your best judgment, what course of action do you think you could look back on, without wishing you had done something different?)

Would You Merely React? Or Might You Take an Organizational View?

It might be natural for a person in Mrs. Baker's position to act on an impulse of annoyance at such an ill-timed request, so unsuitably presented, and merely react to Miss Ordway's highly emotional state of mind. If such personal feelings were in control of the situation, an administrator might easily oversimplify the immediate issue, seeing it more or less like

this: "Should this girl be allowed to present such an ultimatum, and get away with it?"

But if a person in Mrs. Baker's organizational role could *respond as an administrator*, then she would think rationally [2] and in organizational terms about what is at stake here. In taking *an organizational view*, an administrator would take account of Miss Ordway's feelings. She would recognize them as something to be dealt with. But she would not permit them to be the controlling factor for administrative decision.

What about Miss Ordway's Attitude (Her Inside Angle on Requirements for Action "Now")?

Before trying to make a realistic decision as to how Miss Ordway's feelings might be dealt with, it might be well to try and understand what they are. For this purpose something approximating semantic analysis would be useful. What clues can be found in Miss Ordway's words? How do they indicate what seems most important to her—right now?

Hasn't Mrs. Speer summed it up correctly by saying that Miss Ordway *insists* on getting off for the week end? This interpretation of attitude has been amply confirmed by what Miss Ordway has just said to you. "I have three days *coming to me*. So *I want*. . . ." "*I don't care. I need* the time off."

This is the language of a person who is limiting herself to an I-view. It indicates an attitude more like that of a willful child than that of a responsible member of a hospital staff. But merely labeling it "childish" won't get us anywhere. The question is what to do about it.

In following up that question, certain things that you know about Miss Ordway's personal situation and plans for the future would naturally flash through your mind. This girl is only twenty and is relatively inexperienced. But you know that she has been planning to continue working here next year as an attendant, while finishing high school. (Her last year in high school was interrupted two years ago by illness.) She has planned to enter training here as a student nurse two years from now. But are such plans realistic for Miss Ordway if she maintains her present attitude? Won't she need to acquire more self-discipline; for example, in subordinating her personal preferences to the needs of patients, to her contractual agreement with the hospital, and to the requirements of efficient work scheduling?

[2] It might be questioned whether anything approaching case analysis can be applied within a matter of seconds. But seasoned administrators have learned how to size up a situation, rapidly bringing to bear the skills acquired by long habit. Moreover, if you were in Mrs. Baker's position, the facts presented in the following pages would already be in your mind.

Viewed from that angle, this incident might be regarded as an educational opportunity for Miss Ordway. If you see it that way, how might you try to present it to her in that light? How might you help her to see that, for her, getting her own way about this week end could be far less important—in the long run—than starting now to develop a professional attitude?

What Is at Stake, Organizationally?

Urgent though Miss Ordway's feelings are, her personal stake in this situation (both now and in the future) is only a small part of what needs to be thought about by a supervisor. In trying to get some perspective on this incident as part of the hospital situation as a whole, one might formulate the immediate issue in organizational terms. For example, when confronted with such a "request" from an employee, how might a supervisor most effectively meet her organizational responsibilities, both on the spot and in the long run?

By taking such an organizational view one might see that this kind of incident presents a multiple requirement for decision. Perhaps it would be helpful to subdivide the total requirement, considering different aspects of it one at a time. For instance—

Subdividing a Multiple Requirement for Administrative Decision

1. In handling this incident, what is "my" most pressing responsibility? (What has to be decided and done right now?)

2. What other questions raised by this incident do not have to be settled within the next few minutes? What advantages might there be in postponing those decisions?

3. In regard to Miss Ordway's request for the week end—
   a. Who should make this decision, and who should communicate it to Miss Ordway?
   b. What other features of the hospital situation should be considered *before* deciding whether or not it will be wise to grant Miss Ordway's request?
   c. What should the decision be?

By subdividing the issue in some such way as this, you can devote your attention right now to the most pressing requirements. And you can give yourself (and Miss Ordway) a little time to think about the question of the week end. Other important, long-term decisions can be postponed without being forgotten. (For example, you would naturally make a mental note that fairly soon, before this incident fades from our minds, we should review organizational policy, procedures, current practices, and rules in connection with requests for time off.)

First Stage of an Administrative Decision

Isn't it clear that your most immediate responsibility is for the current interview with Miss Ordway (who is in your office now)? If you hope to help her to extend her view of the situation—even a little way—perhaps it would be advisable to start by showing her that you can appreciate her angle.

If that seems like a practical approach, you might begin by expressing sympathy with her feelings. Nothing could be more natural than her wish to be with her family over the Thanksgiving week end. And it's easy to see how space-time conditions present special difficulties in her case.

Space-time conditions. The Ordways are Vermonters. What does that mean in this case? Well, for one thing, the traditional meaning of Thanksgiving as a family festival is stronger in Vermont than almost anywhere else. In some Vermont families Thanksgiving is scarcely less important than Christmas as a time for being together. And there is a practical difficulty, too. Traveling by bus, which is the cheapest way, it takes Miss Ordway a day to get home and another day to get back again.

Background facts to be weighed. It might also seem natural and appropriate to express appreciation of Miss Ordway's record as an attendant during the months she has worked in this hospital. The facts about Miss Ordway's employment would, of course, be in your possession. For instance, you would have read her evaluation report, written last spring. On the whole, it was excellent. Although she was judged as occasionally forgetful and somewhat inclined to "regulate her own assignments," the report stated that she has shown herself to be "very dependable," has taken her work seriously, and "relates well with personnel and patients." She has also given evidence of interest in her work, of intelligence, and of capacity for improvement. Wouldn't you want to mention that this record of work and conduct is of special interest to the hospital administration?

The shortage of nurses. Miss Ordway from her angle, and you from the organizational angle, are both concerned with the shortage of qualified nurses. This shortage has become increasingly acute during the last few years. By expressing sympathy with Miss Ordway's feelings and interest in her projected career, you might be able to show her that you understand and appreciate her *as a person.* If you can keep yourself from condemning her—even in your own mind—because of her ill-advised behavior in this incident, you may be able to help her break through the emotional barrier that has been blocking her view of anything beyond her own corner of this situation.

What about impersonal requirements? Miss Ordway's record indicates that on the whole she has responded well to hospital requirements. But in her present state of mind it will certainly not be easy for her to feel the

force of anything beyond her purely personal wishes. How might you present to her an overriding demand: continuous and adequate staffing of wards around the clock and the calendar? If she could feel the force of this requirement, *as a demand on her* (and not only on other members of the hospital staff), she might be more ready to recognize the reasonableness of contractual agreements and the need for technical procedures that have been set up to meet central requirements.

1. *Contractual agreements.* Probably you wouldn't go into this sort of thing with Miss Ordway right now. But it would doubtless be in your mind. When she was hired, Miss Ordway signed a standard form agreeing "to accept and carry out ward assignments as planned by the nursing office personnel or by the head nurse." Another sentence in the contract stipulates that "two-weeks' written notice is expected, as a minimum, on resignation." Both of these agreements certainly limit Miss Ordway's freedom of action now.

2. *A technical requirement and a special ruling.* Miss Ordway, in addition, appears to be ignoring a technical requirement according to which all special requests for time off for the following week must be entered in the "Time-off Request Book" by Thursday. (Ward assignments for the coming week are posted on Thursday, so that everyone may plan accordingly.) Last February a special ruling was made, according to which special requests may be approved if a person can find "a satisfactory replacement." (However, Miss Ordway has not met this alternative requirement either.)

3. *A hospital policy.* Another feature of this situation that would be in your mind (though you might not mention it to Miss Ordway) is a policy in regard to time off. In this hospital, we believe in being as flexible as is consistent with efficiency in planning weekly schedules. Our policy about time-off requests is this: Any special request (when presented with due notice) shall be *favorably considered.* And if a last-minute request is because of a personal or family emergency, we make a special effort to arrange for time off. A question for you (and for Mrs. Speer) is: How should this policy be interpreted in this case?

4. *An awkward feature of this case.* Would you mention, and if so in what way, a circumstance that shows supervision in a rather poor light? It so happens that, contrary to approved procedure, Miss Ordway has accumulated credit for three extra days off. (Mrs. Speer mentioned to you that she had checked this on the personnel time sheets.) And the worst of it is that Miss Ordway, and not Mrs. Speer, is the person who has initiated action on this extra credit. Feelings of guilt about such supervisory laxity might easily get an administrator down. How do you feel about it? Perhaps, all things considered, this is not the time to dwell on it. Might it be more useful right now to pursue your purpose of trying to

help Miss Ordway take a somewhat less short and narrow view of what is at stake here? With this aim in mind, it might be a good idea to present a practical point for her consideration.

5. *A practical point.* In view of the overriding requirement (continuous care for patients), Miss Ordway *cannot* get off for the week end unless suitable replacements can be found for all three days. At this late date, it certainly isn't going to be easy to get coverage for the holiday week end, especially in view of the regulation against building up extra credits for time off. That regulation would prevent any *one* regular staff member from replacing Miss Ordway for all three days, even if anyone were willing to do so.

Winding up the interview. This practical consideration might be treated as a key point right now. No one knows yet whether or not it will be possible to find suitable replacements. Therefore, if Miss Ordway insists on an immediate answer to her "ultimatum," it will have to be "no." But if she waits a few hours (say till the end of her lunch period), it is at least conceivable that she might get a different answer. In any event, if she goes to Mrs. Speer's office then, she can learn what has been decided.

Why Mrs. Speer's office? Well, this kind of incident should be handled by a head nurse, shouldn't it? Mrs. Speer's failure to deal with it in the first place can be at least partly corrected by action from now on.

Where Are You Now?

As a seasoned administrator, you are doubtless an old hand at interviewing. So you will have been able to think in three tenses while talking with Miss Ordway. But your developing plan for the interview might have been cut short, at any point, by Miss Ordway's inability to reorient herself.

At worst she might have given notice, or flounced off without giving notice, maintaining her belligerent attitude—"the week end, or else!" But at best she may have responded to your sympathetic approach. If so, perhaps she will be able to achieve a little more sense of proportion during the next few hours in regard to the situation as a whole. (Certainly, a case student might see that task as her interim assignment—whether or not she sees it that way herself right now.)

Second Stage of Decision: Interim Action by an Administrator

Your opinion as to what needs to be done next will depend partly on what has happened during your interview with Miss Ordway. But whatever the upshot of that conversation, wouldn't you call Mrs. Speer?

Conferring with a head nurse. When Miss Ordway arrived in your office, you told Mrs. Speer that you'd call her back. But, in any event, you would want to bring Mrs. Speer up to date. And if Miss Ordway is still

in the picture, wouldn't you need to know what Mrs. Speer was going to say when your telephone conversation was interrupted?

Mrs. Speer could now tell you about Miss Ordway's reply to the suggestion that she take next week end off instead of this one: "No, I want to go home this week end . . . so I'm going." Even when Mrs. Speer had pointed out the consequence of this extreme either-or position, Miss Ordway had not budged from her stand that, rather than give up *her* weekend, she would quit.

In order to bring yourself up to date, you would also need to find out whether Mrs. Speer had said anything to Miss Ordway about her disregard of the contractual agreement (signed by every hospital employee) to give at least two-weeks' notice of resignation. Did Mrs. Speer tell her that such organizationally unsound behavior would have to be mentioned if any other hospital or school of nursing should ask about Miss Ordway's employment record here? You could also learn from Mrs. Speer how Miss Ordway built up her credit for extra time off. (She substituted for other attendants who were finding their own replacements for Labor Day, Columbus Day, and Armistice Day this autumn.)

Another bit of information Mrs. Speer could give you is that two other employees also have extra time off coming to them.[3]

Returning the decision to the head nurse. After hearing what Mrs. Speer has to say, you could bring her up to date on your interview with Miss Ordway. Two vital facts for Mrs. Speer to know about were contained in your statement to Miss Ordway that *the decision will come from Mrs. Speer*—toward the end of the lunch hour. Would Mrs. Speer like to consult with you in making up her mind? If so, when could you and she get together?

Forming your considered opinion. In the meantime, you would naturally want to think about Miss Ordway's request—looking at it in the context of the hospital situation as a whole. What other features of this situation should be considered before deciding whether or not Miss Ordway's request should be granted?

In trying to visualize what is at stake here, you might review the following *related issues:*

1. A prime requirement: continuous care of patients
2. Work assignments: contractual obligations, scheduling procedures, and rules
3. Time off: rules (especially the written notice about finding replacements), procedures, and recent practice
4. Miss Ordway: her duties, rights, privileges, and personal situation

[3] Suppose you discovered that these people had requested time off for the coming week end—having done so *before* last Thursday—and had been refused? Would that information make a difference in your decision about Miss Ordway's week end?

5. Other employees: their duties, rights, privileges, and personal situations

6. Responsibilities of supervisors: for control, and as expressed in other actions; past, present, and future

7. A personnel policy: its long-term purpose, its applicability, and meaning in this case

Perhaps there are other features of the case which seem to you more important than some of these. And without knowing which issues you regard as critical, or the relative weights that you assign to them, we can't know what you would decide to do about the Ordway Incident. But experience in a number of study groups suggests that your opinion might be similar to one of the following:

A range of positions. In most study groups, the decisions about Miss Ordway's request include two pairs of opposites. They may be diagramed like this:

Position A	Position B	Position C	Position D
Request granted	Request granted *if*[4] *we* can find satisfactory replacements	Request granted *if she* can find satisfactory replacements	Request refused

Reasoning to support these four positions has been given, as follows:[5]

Position A: Miss Ordway's Request Should Be Unconditionally Granted

Hospital personnel can't be treated as though they were machines. This is a personal question. And it calls for the human approach. Miss Ordway is young and relatively inexperienced. She's lonely. And she wants to go home. She hasn't been home for five months. And tomorrow is Thanksgiving. Think of what that means to this girl, and to her family—Vermonters from way back. She is only asking for time that we owe her. And considering that she built up this extra credit by working on holidays, wouldn't it seem logical to repay her by giving her some holiday time now? She has shown herself to be most cooperative. In fact, we must ask ourselves: "Has there been any exploitation of a very willing girl?"

[4] A somewhat more negative attitude has often been indicated by wording positions B and C: Miss Ordway's request should be denied, *unless* we (or she) can find satisfactory replacements. And, oddly enough, some people have been unwilling to agree that their position was essentially the same as: "She may go *if*. . . ."

[5] The following statements draw on the reasoning presented in several discussion groups. The direct quotations are from spokesmen at a seminar held in August, 1958, under the auspices of the O.E.E.C., at Loughborough Technical College, England.

Moreover, aside from such personal considerations, *we must accept the realities of the situation.* For instance, here's a girl with a good record, who "is desirous of entering the nursing profession. She has good potential as a nurse." In view of the serious shortage of nurses, surely "we want to encourage her." Of course, we should also "help Miss Ordway to realize her responsibilities to the hospital, to patients, and for adhering to procedure." But is refusing her request now a realistic way to pursue that aim?

What about requirements in the disturbed ward? Care for patients isn't going to come to a standstill just because one attendant is away for three days. We've managed before when we were shorthanded. And we can do it again. If necessary, Mrs. Speer and I can pitch in. But if Miss Ordway is compelled to work there over this week end, isn't it likely that her emotional state of mind will be communicated to patients—thereby making them still more disturbed?

Finally, there is the matter of *consistency.* "We can't suddenly turn around and be harsh with this girl, since the previous laxity of practice is our fault. To make a negative decision [on her request] would, in effect, be a change in policy. Such a change would have to be generally communicated before it could properly be put into practice."

In summary then, the decision to grant Miss Ordway's request "is based on principles of humanity, expediency, and consistency."

* * * * * *

Does that line of reasoning appeal to you? Or do you find it too person-centered? Perhaps you take a more organization-centered view, like the following:

Position D: Miss Ordway's Request Should Be Unconditionally Refused

An administrator's primary responsibility is "to maintain the organization." This decision about Miss Ordway's week end is important chiefly because of its organizational implications. In refusing her inappropriate request, we are recognizing "the rights of patients and the rights of employees." The present system is confusing to employees. "This decision will help to clarify it." And it will help us to make a new start in correcting an unfortunate drift of practice away from sound procedures and reasonable rules. It is also in line with the contractual agreement that employees shall "accept and carry out ward assignments" as planned by supervisors.

It might be argued that our previous laxity makes it inappropriate for us to insist now on written rules and well-known procedures. But that would be to say, in effect, "that because we have been bad, we have to be worse before we can be better."

Supervisors are responsible for maintaining management authority. How can we do that if employees rewrite the rules—by their actions—and issue ultimatums, which we accept?

If there were an emergency in Miss Ordway's family, our policy of flexibility might persuade us that we should try to find replacements for her. But there is

no emergency. To grant this request merely because she has made an issue of it would be to show her (and other personnel) that "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." Would that be a good way to exemplify sound principles of personnel management?

The matter of her extra credit for time off is not strictly relevant to the immediate issue. No one is supposed to build up such extra credit. Therefore, the fact that she has done so cannot reasonably be regarded as an argument in her favor. Naturally we shall repay our debt to her as soon as efficient scheduling permits it. But she is making an unrealistic assumption in taking it for granted that such a debt is "payable on demand."

If Miss Ordway quits in a temper, we shall not be "losing a good nurse." In fact, by refusing to give her the week end off, we shall be doing a favor to a potentially good nurse. We shall be encouraging her to develop her sense of responsibility for meeting hospital requirements.

All things considered, therefore, it is clear that we cannot treat this as a special case. The decision must rest primarily on organizational principles, with due weight given to long-term requirements and consequences.

* * * * * *

Do you agree with that opinion? Or would you take a modified position —somewhere between A and D. For instance—

Position B: Miss Ordway May Go if We Can Find Suitable Replacements

The reasoning given to support this decision has usually been similar to that given as Position A, but with more emphasis on the need for finding *satisfactory* replacements and on the difficulty of doing so—at this late date. In some study groups, it has also been suggested that "we" are in a better position to find replacements than Miss Ordway is. Mrs. Speer could telephone to a few people who don't work here regularly but who are known to us as satisfactory because they have worked here before. If one of them could substitute for Miss Ordway on all three days, there would be no hospital rule against it.

Position C: Miss Ordway May Go if She Can Find Suitable Replacements

Supporting reasoning for this decision has usually been close to that outlined in Position D. But often the wording of the written notice has been regarded as *the* key fact. For example: "In this hospital we have certain rules. 'The only alternative [to giving due notice in requesting time off] is *for the employee to secure satisfactory replacements.*' We suggest that it is wise to stick to the rules ourselves, instead of merely expecting our personnel to do so."

Miss Ordway has not yet even looked for replacements. But if she can find substitutes who are satisfactory to us, would it be reasonable to deny her request?

* * * * * *

Analytical note. After reading these four different statements of opinion, you might ask two questions: First, if a person uses the method of situational analysis that you recommend, can one predict the decision that he will make in a given case? Our answer to that question would be: "No, not precisely." But within limits—"Yes, allowing for some variation owing to his individual temperament and to preconditioning experiences of his own."

Second, granting that there is often no one best way to resolve a difference between people (such as this one between a subordinate and her supervisors), aren't some solutions preferable to others? In answering that question, we'd say: "Emphatically, yes." To illustrate both answers—

In this case (1) We'd predict that *anyone who combines all four angles of view* couldn't reasonably take either of the extreme positions, but might make either of the modified decisions. (2) In our opinion, decision C fits the case better than any of the other three because it meets a wider range of requirements.

First, unlike decisions A and B, it gives *due weight to a written rule* (that, in making a special request for time off, an employee should find her own replacements). Second, leaving this loophole (through which Miss Ordway *may* be able to get what she wants) is not going further than the rule allows. To refuse to go that far (by unconditionally rejecting her request, as in decision D) would be inconsistent with the rule as now written.

Third, in going as far as the rule allows, we can go part way toward the place where Miss Ordway now is, having been propelled there by feelings that are perfectly natural (though unsuitable, under the circumstances). But, unlike position A, decision C *puts organizational requirements first and is fair to other personnel.*

Fourth, in this way we can give Miss Ordway an opportunity to come to grips with a practical question by trying to find people who could replace her *satisfactorily* (that is, who could do her work without accumulating excessive credit for time off). Thus, unlike decisions A and D, C *doesn't immediately answer her question.* A few hours from now, after grappling with some realities of the situation, Miss Ordway may be in a more reasonable mood. If so, perhaps we can work out an "integrative solution" by planning *with her* for another holiday week end (possibly at Christmas time).

Fifth, and most important for the long run, decision C (unlike A) *leaves us squarely on the spot where we must clarify our thinking,* but (unlike D) it does nothing to hamper our freedom to improve our position—in future—with regard to requests for time off.

Further Decisions to Be Made in This Case

What kind of conference with Mrs. Speer? Whatever decision you reach on the immediate issue of the week end, how might you try to meet your organizational responsibilities toward Mrs. Speer? For instance, suppose her decision turns out to be different from yours. What would you do about that? Is it all-important that the decision communicated to Miss Ordway should be the right one (your decision, naturally)? Or might it be even more important for the long run that Mrs. Speer should (1) rely on her own judgment, (2) communicate her decision to Miss Ordway, and (3) have a chance to reappraise her opinion—perhaps in consultation with you—in view of the consequences?

What if Miss Ordway takes direct action? Another possible development in the case (at the time of the incident) is that Miss Ordway might not show up in Mrs. Speer's office after lunch. Suppose she just takes off tomorrow? Who should say and do what, if *she reports for work again on Monday?* Should she be reprimanded, perhaps even penalized? Or would it seem preferable not to say any more about this embarrassing incident? Or should she be told that—by taking direct action—after having been duly warned, she has terminated her employment here?

What about other personnel with accumulated credit for time off? Another fact of this case is that at least two other people have accumulated extra credit for time off. What about that? Would you just lie low, hoping that nobody will precipitate another undesirable incident like this one? Or would you take the initiative in getting information (about all time-off credits) and in paying all debts as promptly as possible?

Long-range Thinking about This Case

Having decided the immediate and intermediate issues posed by the Ordway Incident, a busy administrator (such as you are in Mrs. Baker's role) might dismiss the case from her mind—treating it as nothing more than an annoying incident. But wouldn't that treatment of an organizational experience involve a considerable degree of waste *for the organization?*

The most important part of any administrative decision still remains to be made in this case. That part consists in *remedial and preventive thinking.* Such analysis for long-term action would follow naturally in the mind of any administrator who had formed the habit of asking such questions as these: What seems to have been accountable for this incident with Miss Ordway? How might we correct flaws in our situation so that this kind of thing would be less likely to happen again?

In seeking for sources of difficulties and for ways to correct them, an

administrator can review issues that have already been factored out—before making short-term decisions. But such issues can be *looked at* differently when one *looks with* a view to taking preventive action for the future. For example—

A written rule. It now seems obvious that the phrase "satisfactory replacements" is not sufficiently precise. Satisfactory *to whom?* Satisfactory *in what respects?* When rules are put in writing, isn't management responsible for trying to make sure that their meaning—at least in what the words denote—is as clear and specific as possible?

Naturally, an assistant director (as Mrs. Baker is) can't just go ahead and revise a notice that is signed by the director. But if she thought that it should be altered, she could submit a revised draft and explain why she recommends more precise wording.

What other issues—if any—might profitably be carried up the line to higher management by a person who had lived through such a situation? For example, what about supervisory control?

Supervisory procedure: a control mechanism. How did it happen that Miss Ordway's claim for three extra days off took Mrs. Speer by surprise? What more efficient system might be devised for keeping track of time-off credits?

But supervisory control is more than a mechanism.

Supervisory control throughout the hospital. Has there been a similar relaxation of supervisory control in other wards, either in regard to time off or in other matters? If so, might not this incident be advantageously used as a starting point for performance review by all our head nurses and nursing supervisors?

Making a change in current practice. Assuming that you agree some tightening up is in order, how and when might such action most effectively be initiated? From an organizational angle, it would seem sound practice to take account of a principle which has been highlighted in this case—namely, *the obligation to give advance notice.* Wouldn't it be setting a good example to other personnel if management representatives were to give advance notice of the intention to adhere to announced procedures and rules? And wouldn't the relationship between working partners be appropriately recognized by explaining why supervisors feel it necessary to tighten up?

Self-development for management representatives. As you look back to the beginning of the Ordway Incident, what do you think of Mrs. Speer's action in bucking the decision up to you? What may have been accountable? Could there have been any confusion in her mind between her responsibility for handling a subordinate and the approved practice of consulting you (since the nursing supervisor was not on duty) about

a difficulty in scheduling? If so, you'll want to help her recognize that in this case there was no difficulty about scheduling until one of her subordinates made a difficulty.

Learning to make such distinctions is one way in which a supervisor can develop managerial capacity. Another way is by learning to rely on his own judgment. Perhaps Mrs. Speer can develop her capacity to make workable decisions if she uses all the opportunities for exercising judgment that are inherent in her organizational position. If you decide to pass back to Mrs. Speer the responsibility of deciding about Miss Ordway's week end, you will be giving her an assignment which may be educational for her. What more might you do in trying to stimulate self-development by Mrs. Speer, and by other management representatives (including yourself)?

Interpreting an organization policy. Another part of the difficulty in this case seems to have been a misunderstanding about a personnel policy. It is now evident that *supervisors have tended to apply a policy* for flexibility *as though it were a rule.* We have unduly subordinated requirements for efficient scheduling in our effort to be "nice to nice people." Suppose we now reexamine, as all of a piece, our policy, our procedures, our rules, and our practices. Are all of them mutually consistent? And does each meet the special requirements for which it was designed?

ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNFORESEEN

An administrator who follows through on such a case, by trying to learn—and to stimulate learning—from experience, can transform an annoying incident into something useful. It has been said that "wisdom lies in masterful administration of the unforeseen." But how can such wisdom be achieved except by a gradual process of distilling experience from actual situations? Analyzing actual cases and reflecting on them can be ways to do this. Starting with difficulties and opportunities in relatively remote situations, students can broaden the scope of their thinking to include a range of general ideas. And by discussing facts, issues, and principles—as they have appeared in many situations—everyone in a study group has opportunities to learn not only from the experience of people in cases but also from the experience and insight of other members in the study group.

In the next three chapters we describe and illustrate in some detail how we try to stimulate self-education by the Incident Process, and by a system of job rotation among students.

PART THREE

THE INCIDENT PROCESS AND A SYSTEM OF JOB ROTATION

CHAPTER 6

THE INCIDENT PROCESS OF CASE ANALYSIS

> The case method has a basic limitation in that it cannot readily reproduce the unfolding quality of actual events.[1]

SECTION I. REASONS FOR MODIFYING TRADITIONAL PRACTICES [2]

Professor Ulrich's comment raises provocative questions. For instance: (1) Is this "basic limitation" *important?* And if so, why? (2) Is the limitation *inherent in case method?* Or, might modifying the method be helpful? (3) Is it also partly rooted in *habits of mind* that people bring to the study of cases? If so, what might be done to stimulate interest in identifying and changing such habits? (4) Finally, if this basic limitation could be even partially overcome, *might not case method be more useful, to more people, than it has been?*

Let's consider these questions.

Is This Basic Limitation Important, and if So, Why?

The ongoing process of change is a hallmark of every real situation. Therefore, if a student doesn't perceive and respond to the quality of *process* when he thinks about a given case, then that case hasn't become real to him. But unless it comes to life in his mind, he won't put enough of himself into it so that he can get much out of it. Moreover, if the cases under discussion aren't recognizably real, is it reasonable to hope that peo-

[1] David N. Ulrich, *The Case Method of Teaching Human Relations and Administration: An Interim Statement*, p. 30.

[2] If you're interested in our detailed recommendations about what to do in directing case study by the Incident Process, you'll find them in another of our texts, *Director's Manual: Case Studies for Management Development*. In this book we limit ourselves chiefly to saying why we developed the Incident Process and what we think can be learned by using it.

ple will think of *applying in real situations* whatever they think they have learned—by analyzing these cases?

In other words, we emphatically agree with Professor Ulrich that the limitation he notes is important. So—what, if anything, might be done about it? One way of setting to work on a limitation encountered in using a method is to ask—

Is This Limitation Inherent in the Method, or Might Modifying the Method Be Helpful?

The case method is not fixed and unalterable. (If it were, how could it be fruitful for learning in such diverse fields as law, business administration, medicine, social work, and engineering, to mention only a few?) Starting with that premise, one can experiment with all three component features, regarding the *case report*, *case discussion*, and *case analysis* as interrelated variables. How might we use them more productively?

What about Case Reporting?

Conventional ways of handling a case report reflect some questionable assumptions.

First, if it's important to reproduce the living quality of a case situation, then it's unrealistic to reduce the whole thing to writing, and to expect that everyone will recapture its living quality by reading.

Probably all of us know people who have a high degree of "historical imagination." Such people can project their minds into a written account of a past situation, "understanding it as though from the inside outwards." But apparently many more people do not use their imagination in that way. Certainly there is considerable evidence that many cases have looked lifeless and static to many students. This happens whenever people read cases as nothing more than dull accounts of something so far away and long ago as to be unbelievably boring.[3]

Second, experience suggests that the *process* of case reporting can be far more illuminating than the *product*. Many people have recognized that making a case report is a good way to learn by doing. For example, when a person goes into a situation to gather material for writing a case report, he rarely has any difficulty in seeing that the whole system of relationships is undergoing a process of rapid change. In fact, a difficulty about which many case writers have complained bitterly is that they can't get a clear picture of "facts that are so," because so many of these facts keep turning into something else.

Perhaps more people could learn from that difficulty if we discarded the

[3] On this point we speak from experience, and with feeling, as case writers. Our case reports are usually so detailed that when we offered them only as reading material, they often proved more effective as "stoppers" than as starters.

assumption that case writers and case readers must be different people. Certainly, case writing requires both aptitude and experience if the product is to meet high standards. But since *the process of preparing a case report* can be educational, why limit that experience to experts?

In recent years, leading exponents of case method—notably at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration—have required every case student to write at least one case. This broadening of opportunity seems all to the good. But the experiment can be carried further with even better results.

Assembling Case Reports Orally

In developing the Incident Process, one of our aims has been to emphasize the idea that change is characteristic of every situation. Many people seem to pick up that idea more readily when they reconstruct a case orally —by asking questions—than when they first get their information by reading a full-length report. Anyone who starts with an Incident—some point of climax in a case—is naturally interested to find out about earlier developments. He wants to know: "How did things get this way?" (Incidentally, as people go about getting information on facts in case after case, they inevitably get considerable practice in certain skills of case reporting.) But in order fully to realize the implications of process, a person must do more than recognize that changes have come about in the past. He must be able to feel that he is in a situation where (1) the future is bearing down on him, now; (2) he doesn't know what the next turn of events will be; but (3) he does know that his decisions and actions will make an important difference in what the situation becomes.

How can a person feel that way about a case that's over and done with? By using his imagination. But here we come up against the difficulty suggested in our third question—

Is This Basic Limitation Partly Rooted in Habits of Mind?

When a case doesn't come to life in the mind of a student, what's stopping it? Case method couldn't be wholly accountable for such a road block. Aren't we being unrealistic in speaking about case method as though "it" could reproduce the living quality of a case? Surely that assignment can be met only by minds that use the method. If, then, we focus on minds rather than on method, what is the evidence that most people are fully aware of the fact, and the implications, of *ongoing process*, while they are being swept along by current events?

When one starts looking for evidence on this point, it appears that most of us live through events with relatively little awareness of the opportunities involved in the fact that every situation has both a past and a future. It's easier to let ourselves become submerged in the wave of the

present. When we're through it without being smothered, we heave a sigh of relief and try to forget about it as soon as we can.[4]

If such a limited response to process in daily events is habitual in many minds, isn't it all the more worth while to develop some systematic way of emphasizing the opportunities, as well as the difficulties, associated with the fact of ceaseless change?

The Incident Process Invites People to Relive Every Case They Discuss

The Incident Process is not a final answer to the basic limitation associated in many minds with case method. But this variant of traditional techniques has seemed to help many people get beyond certain habits and attitudes which limit what anyone can learn by case method.

When a person studies remote cases (or analyzes his own experience), a full measure of learning becomes possible only when he (1) puts a good deal of himself into the work of analysis; (2) uses some method to "travel around" (getting different angles of view); (3) uses or develops some system of analysis that is *realistic* (that yields results in the form of workable decisions); (4) keeps searching for general ideas and operative principles "in the ever-tangled skein of human affairs"; and (5) keeps going back and forth between remote cases and his current experience, trying to apply some part of what he has learned.

We don't claim that all this will happen automatically in the mind of everyone who uses the Incident Process. But there is considerable evidence that this way of analyzing a case does more than help people to recognize that a remote case *was real* at one time. Most people find that it helps them to think, and to feel, that the situation is happening *now* and that *they are taking part in it.*

Here's how it works.

Jumping in, at a point of climax. When anyone starts on a case by reading a thumbnail sketch of a precipitating Incident, he takes hold of something that's likely to stir his curiosity. In our groups, a written Incident (usually not longer than about one hundred words) is given out at the beginning of a meeting. During two or three minutes of silent study, each member asks himself: "What's going on here? What clues can I pick up from this sketch as leads toward information that I need, in order to find out how things got this way?"

Appended to each written Incident is a suggestion for working on the

[4] Safety engineers are in a favorable position to notice the careless attitude which most people have about learning from experience. They have found it uphill work to awaken interest in the process by which minor accidents build up to the point where serious injuries become increasingly likely and finally happen, usually being regarded—at that stage—as inevitable.

case in some specific role. In accepting that invitation, members of the group all (1) head toward the same general kind of decision, and (2) imagine that they are responsible for immediate consequences (in that case). For example, in the *Oil Rag Case*, we usually suggest: "Try to imagine yourself in the position of the treasurer, at the time of the Incident. What might you do?" In other cases—such as *The Outraged Sales Manager*, for example, or *The Nervous Welder* [5]—we invite people to adopt the role of an impartial arbitrator (who has been called into the case from outside). The pull of any such role assignment is such that it's not necessary for a teacher to urge that people should think responsibly about the case. The assignment itself says to them: "Don't hang around outside there, criticizing and judging. Come on in and help work this thing out."

Getting into a case, by asking questions. Usually the first spate of questions, triggered by an Incident, concerns the *what, when, where,* and *how* of the case—at the time of the Incident—and *who* was immediately involved.[6] (According to the ground rules of the Incident Process, at this stage all questions should be directed toward facts of the case. And none should ask for the opinion of the person who is presenting the case.) Glimpses into the *why* of behavior can be gained if the "man with the facts" can quote from what participants said, or hand out an excerpt from some important document.

When they get into a case from outside, many people find it natural to take an organizational view. If the case took place in some organization, questions are always asked about organizational roles, functions, and job assignments.

In the course of twenty to thirty minutes, some forty to eighty fact-finding questions are usually answered. By the end of that time, people may feel that they've got more than they bargained for. What's to be done with this wealth—now a welter—of information? Our suggestion is: Summarize it. In doing so, a study group works out its answer to a question that needs to be asked in every case before making decisions: "What's the gist of this whole story?" At this point, case reporting merges with case analysis, which is carried further by—

Defining a short-term issue. At this stage, the assignment is to point up the case—temporarily—by compressing its call for action into a single question: "What needs to be decided, and done, right now?"

[5] All of these cases have been prepared for group discussion, and are published by the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.

[6] Thus an Incident serves as a starting point from which to develop a full case report. In this way, it overcomes a major difficulty associated with short written case reports, prepared case problems, and film strips, which are expected to be used *as given*. In developing the Incident Process, one of our chief aims was to combine the advantages of starting with something that could be read in a few minutes, yet arriving at a fully rounded, "motion" picture, *before* asking students to begin analyzing a case.

We recommend stating issues in organizational terms. For instance, suppose the situation under discussion is the *Oil Rag Case*, and the group is working in the role of Mr. Deane, the treasurer. Someone may formulate the issue as: "What shall I do now?" If so, someone else may suggest: "Couldn't we get a more realistic view of what needs to be decided if we define the issue in a way that brings out Mr. Deane's organizational responsibilities? For instance, when a treasurer finds himself in such a situation in a production department, what action could he suitably take? [7]

Making and testing short-term decisions. This stage has four parts.

1. First, each member in the study group works by himself. Starting with the issue that has just been agreed upon by the group as a whole, he jots down his own decision and outlines his reasoning. He signs his paper and gives it to the discussion leader.

2. By sorting these papers, the leader can help the group to assemble in separate opinion groups. Each of these subgroups confers separately. They start by electing a spokesman. Then, by comparing notes [8] and consolidating their reasoning, they try to prepare the strongest possible case in support of their mutual decision.

3. After these "huddles" (as they are usually called) the case for each decision can be briefly presented—and still more briefly debated—by the spokesmen. Or, instead, the various decisions can be role-played. In listening to spokesmen (or watching role playing) other members of the group can test the reasoning worked out in their opinion group. (At least, they can if partisan feelings permit.)

4. Group decisions can then be given another kind of test as the leader unfolds the last bit of the case. Only now does the group find out *what actually was decided and done, after the Incident*, and—if the information is available—what some of the consequences were in the immediate sequel.

Reflecting on the case as a whole, and as one among others. With short-term decisions out of the way, the time is ripe for the culminating stage of case analysis in which fundamental issues are explored. Long-range thinking is called for when the leader (or some other member) raises such questions as these: "Now that we can look back over this whole case, *what seems to have been accountable for accomplishments, and for difficulties?*

[7] One advantage of stating an issue-for-action in organizational terms is that it helps a person to regain his objectivity, which he may have lost to some extent by identifying himself with some person or group in the case. Another advantage is that, by meeting this assignment in case after case, a person may begin to get the habit of taking an organizational view of any case.

[8] We have yet to see a single instance in which every member of any opinion group gave all the same reasons for deciding as he—or she—did. But during this kind of informal conferring with members of like mind, each person can get something approximating a multiple inside view.

How might more have been accomplished? How might such difficulties be prevented in any such situation?

In considering issues that are central to the case as a whole, members of a study group are working on one issue that can be important for their own future; namely: "*What can we learn from this case, and from each other, as we discuss its deeper implications?*"

In trying to get to the heart of any situation, to learn from it, a four-dimensional view can be useful. For instance, in *looking back* over the whole time span of a case, what looks most significant—as behavior that seems to have been notably effective (or ineffective) and as fundamental issues (some of which may have been overlooked or underestimated by participants)? In such a *re*-view of a case, long-term requirements tend to show up. Thus looking back merges naturally with *looking up* to the level of general ideas and operative principles. And looking up leads to *looking around* at other situations known to members of the study group. What resources, difficulties, opportunities, and requirements that appear in this case are common to other situations? How do the general ideas that seem applicable in this case stand up in other cases?

It might be supposed that *looking ahead*, with a view to modifying one's own behavior, would inevitably follow in a cycle of case analysis during which operative principles are worked out for productive interaction between people in cases. But it seems that relatively few case analysts spontaneously ask the forward-looking question: "If these behavior patterns look so attractive and seem so fitting—organizationally—why don't we try them on, ourselves?"

Working in a Situation; Taking Turns as Leaders

One way to work toward the stage where case method merges with case-mindedness is to carry role *playing* to the point where every group member takes turns *working* in a variety of functional roles.

The role of discussion leader. According to our practice, each group member is invited to take at least one turn as discussion leader-for-the-day. In that role he needs foresight (when selecting and preparing a case). And (when he leads a discussion) he needs supervisory ability and skills of committee chairmanship. If he chooses, he can learn something not only while doing this job but also afterward, by hindsight. In reviewing the discussion, what possibilities can he see for more effective behavior by a leader? One place to look for material on that question is in the report made by his partner.

The observer-reporter. Each member may also volunteer as an observer-reporter. In that role he is responsible for keeping track of what is said during a discussion meeting and for reporting to the group. For a student

of social relations, this position has important advantages. For instance, during a discussion period the observer is functionally detached. (He has no responsibility for getting out production on the case that is being discussed.) Thus he is favorably placed to take an outside view, looking objectively at what is going on around the conference table. Afterward, in preparing his report, he is expected to take an organizational view of work requirements and of job performance. (What case material can he pick up to illustrate effective or ineffective behavior?) His regular role as a rank-and-file member of the group can help him to make realistic judgments. He's in a position to understand what his associates are up against. He can see their situation "from the inside outwards." And when he reports his findings, he can speak as an insider. But can he detach himself far enough from the immediate situation of the study group to get a long-range view of requirements? Some Observers have tried to meet that difficult assignment. And one way for any Observer to move in that direction is to study reports written by his predecessors. What can he learn from them?

Other favorable openings for a case-minded view of a current situation are available to people who work on special projects; for example as "methods men," or on a report committee. And possibilities for making this situation into a test case may be seen by everyone who takes part in one of the special meetings, at which the business of the day is to take stock (of accomplishments to date and of unsurmounted difficulties) and to develop plans (for making changes).

But we shan't go into any of that here. This answer to our third question has been long enough. It's time now to take up the fourth question:

If This Basic Limitation Could Be Even Partially Overcome, Might Not Case Method Become More Useful, to More People, than It Has Been?

In our opinion, the possibilities of learning by case method have barely been scratched so long as case study is regarded primarily as an academic discipline, to be taught only by experts with an academic background.[9]

[9] We don't wish to belittle the tremendously valuable work by case method which has been and is being done in universities and by academic people. For instance, the brilliant teaching and research at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration has been most productive, not only for university students but also for executives who have attended conferences. In business administration, the Harvard Cases have become almost synonymous with case method. And the Cabot Cases have been widely accepted as a notable contribution to medical teaching. Case method has revolutionized teaching in law and engineering. Nevertheless, it has been true that many practical people who might profitably use case method, to develop their capacities, have felt sure that there was nothing in it for them.

No one can know what case method might do—to make interaction more productive—until it has been practiced in a great variety of situations where people are in a position to learn, from experience and with each other.

Where Has Case Method Seemed Irrelevant or Impractical?

Two places where the possibilities of case method have been overlooked, or underused, are these: the early job experience of college graduates, and the stage reached by supervisors after years of experience.

Why don't college students take case method with them when they graduate? Perhaps you remember the cry of despair uttered by the brilliant young man whom we quoted in Chapter 2: "If only they'd give me a problem, I know I could solve it. But all I see here is a mess!" That "problem case" would not be so significant if it were more exceptional. But unfortunately, that young man is one of many who have been unable to solve the problem of adapting an academic case method to a real situation.

Another place where case method could be used to good purpose is in the education of men and women who work as first-line supervisors. Until recent years, it has usually been decided, *for them,* that case method is way beyond them. The standard argument goes something like this: "The average foreman is not very bright. You can't expect him to work things out for himself—by case analysis. He's got to have things spelled out for him."

In our opinion, that estimate errs on two counts. It underrates foremen. And it overrates lecturing. Experience with many groups of first-line supervisors shows that they have much to teach—as well as to learn—by case method. But some of the traditional practices of case study need to be altered in order to adapt it to the needs of such busy people.

Case Method Can Be Useful to Mature Supervisors and to Future Supervisors

In developing the Incident Process, one of our aims has been to make case method more useful for management development.[10] Among the features that have contributed to that purpose, the following have most frequently been mentioned:

First, the reading requirement is so small (except for members in the two leading roles) that it can be met in a couple of minutes, at the start of a discussion meeting. Thus it presents no obstacle to a busy supervisor. No homework is required from rank-and-file members of the discussion

[10] We use this term to denote self-development, by people at work, and not only when they are talking in a conference room.

group. A supervisor's experience in working with people gives him what it takes to pick up clues from a written Incident. And future supervisors can learn some of what they need to know when they work, on real cases, in the role of a supervisor or an arbitrator.

Second, our five-step process of case analysis approximates what a supervisor needs to do when he comes up against actual difficulties in which people play a part.

Third, in every case that is discussed, immediate issues are similar—in character and scope—to issues that confront a first-line supervisor. And the short-term decisions called for in these cases are much like those that he is called upon to make in his everyday work.

Fourth, as a method of reaching decisions, the Incident Process offers something more specific than such highly generalized advice as: "Get the facts. Then weigh and decide." What a supervisor needs, more than any such slogan, is opportunity to get intensive practice in such skills as:

1. Determining what kinds of facts he needs to know about
2. Getting, establishing, and organizing available information
3. Making up his mind as to what needs to be decided and done, both right now and over the long haul
4. Making decisions that give due weight to opinions and ideas that have not previously been in his mind
5. Learning from experience as he goes along, partly by talking things over with other people and partly by reflecting on recent happenings

Many supervisors have welcomed the chance to apply these skills in a case study group. And many administrators, executives, and academic people who have attended case discussions where other conferees were first-line supervisors have commented favorably on the caliber of these "students."

What's Missing?

To outline the theory of the Incident Process is to stay far from the heart of it. The core of any such discussion technique is reached only when one can see and sense what happens when people use it. And here we come squarely up against part of what Professor Ulrich was doubtless thinking about when he made the comment quoted at the start of this chapter. Statements written by anyone less than a literary genius "cannot readily reproduce" the authentic quality of a living, changing situation.

The general description just given conveys nothing of the dynamic character of a case discussion by the Incident Process. In order to appreciate that quality, one must actually be there. Then one can see signs of keen interest (even in reading an Incident), of determination (in tracking down a clue glimpsed through an Incident), of tension released (when a new lead sets off a spurt of questioning), and of satisfaction (when a key

fact is disclosed). One may also notice evidences of frustration (when someone senses that he has got off the track, or has reached a dead end in some line of inquiry, or when a spokesman sees that some people remain unconvinced by arguments that seem absolutely decisive to him and to members of his opinion group). When case discussion is in full swing, there are always signs of personal involvement and of mutual respect. (Indications of such feelings are apt to be strongest during the time when small groups of like-minded members work together in huddles.)

In the next section, by drawing on an observer's report, we offer a glimpse of the Incident Process in action. If you can imagine that you are actually there as a guest observer, you can get some impression of how a case situation unfolds when people reconstruct it by the Incident Process.

SECTION 2. WORKING ON A CASE BY THE INCIDENT PROCESS [11]

Twenty-three men are sitting around a conference table. A large card, standing before each man, gives his name and a number. (The numbers—going in sequence around the table—are for the convenience of the observer, who is responsible for keeping track of what everyone says.)

These men have just had supper together. Twenty-one of them are supervisors from various levels of the X Corporation. Of the two other people present, the observer is a member of the training department (who will take the lead in the next meeting). The discussion-leader-for-the-day is a consultant.

This is the first meeting in a management development course. The leader has just spent fifteen minutes outlining the Incident Process and making a few other explanations. For instance, he has explained what the observer will be doing. He has mentioned that no written report will be issued on this first meeting. And he has stated that all notes and other material written by people enrolled in these meetings will be treated as confidential.

Now they're ready to start on the chief business of the meeting.

Stage 1. Starting with an Incident

The leader distributes copies of an Incident. As he does so, he refers to the appended suggestion for analyzing the case, noting that it asks for a more explicit statement of reasoning than most of us are accustomed to make in the course of our everyday work.

Here's your copy.

[11] Portions of a report on an actual session. In trying to reproduce for you something of the quality as well as "the facts" of a case discussion, we have altered an observer's report as follows: (1) We have included the gist of answers given to fact-finding questions. (Ordinarily, an observer writes down only the questions, because he already has in mind the information used by the discussion leader to answer the questions about facts.) (2) We have amplified some of the descriptive notes, so that you may more easily imagine that you are present at this discussion meeting. For the sake of brevity, we have given only a sampling of fact-finding questions.

THE CALVETTI INCIDENT

On Wednesday morning, February 6, 1952, George Roble (foreman) informed Jack Krause (the plant superintendent) that Mr. Calvetti (employee and president of the local Union) had again refused to comply with the request to move his car from the "Restricted Parking Area."

In view of the special circumstances of this case, the Plant Superintendent went back with Mr. Roble to his department. In the foreman's presence, the superintendent explained to Mr. Calvetti the seriousness of continuing to disregard a plant rule, ordered him to move his car during the lunch period, and warned him of the consequences if he should refuse to obey this order.

Shortly after lunch, Mr. Roble called Mr. Krause to say that Mr. Calvetti had not moved his car and that, during the lunch period, he had been overheard saying to a group of employees: "I'm going to see if they'll fire me if I don't move my car."

Suggestion for Working on This Case

Try to imagine yourself in the role of the impartial arbitrator to whom this case has been referred. On the day of the Incident, Mr. Calvetti was discharged. He promptly filed a grievance. The parties were unable to settle their dispute by the regular grievance procedure. Your award will be final and binding. You will be expected to jot down your reasoning, as an arbitrator would do, in outlining his opinion.

The group now spends a few minutes studying the Incident. Two members underline some words. Another scribbles a note at the bottom of his copy of the Incident.

Stage 2. Gathering and Organizing Information

Now the questions start flying. Here are a few of them. "Where is this restricted area?" "Who *is* allowed to park there?" "Is there a rule about it?" "Have there been violations by other people?" "Are there other parking facilities?"

Answers to these questions provide the following information:

The restricted parking area is in front of the main office. The company president and a few other top executives park there regularly. A few spaces are kept open for salesmen and for visitors. The rule against parking in this area is unwritten. But it is well known to employees. A few other workers have disregarded the restriction from time to time. But all of them have moved their cars on request.

Those answers were given orally. But the answer to the fifth question is given out on a sheet of paper. Having anticipated this question, the discussion leader prepared a *ground plan*. He now hands it out, and there is a brief silence while people study it. This ground plan shows that parking facilities are ample. And the parking lot opposite the entrance to the factory looks as though it would be more convenient for a shoe cutter (as Mr. Calvetti is) than the restricted area in front of the main office, on Michigan Avenue.

Suddenly, several members are struck by something about the location of the restricted area. There is a burst of questions. Three people talk at once. The leader laughs and says: "Now, wait a minute. Let's have these questions one at a time." Two members shoot up their hands. A third man bursts out: "So this restricted area is on a *public street?*" Several people in the group exclaim: "Aha!"

These ejaculations are followed by a barrage of "let's-make-sure" questions: "Did the company ask the town authorities for permission to restrict this area?" (Yes). "Did they *get* permission?" (No). "Oh! So they had no *right* to do it?" (Legally, no).

After this clincher a short pause ensues. If you glance around the table, you may notice that several members now relax. They lean back in their chairs with evident satisfaction. If you keep track of their behavior afterward, you will see that they ask no more questions about facts. Even now their expressions suggest that for them the chase has ended. They apparently feel satisfied that they already hold in their hands *the* key fact on which the decision must turn. So why hunt around any more? Let the others chase all over the lot if they want to.

But apparently some of the others feel differently. They think there must be more to this case. They're off now in a new direction: "Did Calvetti ever bring this matter up at a Union meeting?" "Had other Union members expressed dissatisfaction about the restricted parking?"

Answers to these questions indicate that (as far as is known) the parking restriction had never been discussed in a Union meeting, as a potential grievance. It had not been raised by the Union, as an actual grievance.

Three lines of inquiry are now carried on alternately: "Does this company *fire* people for parking in the wrong place?" "Was Calvetti warned about this, *before* the day he was fired?" "How long has this song and dance with Calvetti been going on?" "What does the contract say about discharge?"

Answers to these questions indicate that this difference of opinion about where Mr. Calvetti was entitled to park his car had been mounting toward a climax since early in January. The first few times he left his car in the restricted area, he moved it when the janitor reminded him about the rule. After several such incidents, the janitor warned him (on February 4) that management wouldn't put up with this kind of thing indefinitely. On that day, Mr. Calvetti did not move his car. On February 6 the janitor brought the matter to the attention of Calvetti's foreman (who spoke to the plant superintendent about it. See Incident). The question about discharge for improper parking elicits the following information: Up to now, no one has been discharged from this company for violating the parking rule. And even in the present case, management stated that the discharge was not for violating the restricted parking rule but for "gross *insubordination*" (refusal to obey an order).

In answer to the question about the contract, the discussion leader hands out copies of a sheet entitled "Applicable Contract Provisions." This page contains clauses on working conditions, the grievance procedure, and discipline ("for just cause").

After digesting this information, members open up another line of inquiry:

"Is this a new union?" "Has there been trouble between Management and the Union?" "Are contract negotiations now in progress, or soon coming up?" "Is Mr. Calvetti a new president?"

Answers to these questions show that the Union has been in the picture for a year and a half; that Management-Union relations have been good; that the current contract was signed on behalf of the local by Mr. Calvetti, its first president, on August 25, 1950; that this first contract is not due to be renegotiated until next year.

This information contains something that appears to strike one man as a poser. He smiles and shakes his head. His expression seems to say: "Well, it's not that, then." Is he asking himself: "What *did* set this thing off? What made Calvetti decide to buck the parking rule?"

At this point Member No. 9, who has raised his hand several times a little way, and then put it down again before being noticed by the leader, now raises it again and is recognized: "How long has Calvetti been with the company?" (About two years and three months. He was first employed on November 21, 1949, a year after this plant was built.) "Is he an aggressive character, always looking for trouble?" (There isn't anything in Management's testimony that suggests such aggressiveness before this Incident started building up. In fact, up to January of this year, Mr. Calvetti has always complied with plant rules, including the parking rule.) Other members now join in the questioning. "Did he give any reasons for his defiance?" (Not as far as the record shows, unless you would consider as a reason what he is reported to have said during the lunch period on February 6.) "Who heard him say: 'I'll see if they fire me if I don't move my car?' " (That remark was reported by a Union member who said he was in the group that Mr. Calvetti was talking to.) "Did this witness 'have it in' for Calvetti?" (There was no charge to that effect.) "How about Calvetti's record?" (Excellent. It contained no complaint against him, either for his work or for his conduct.)

During the last few minutes you may have noticed that the rate of questioning has been slowing down a little. A pause now ensues.

DISCUSSION LEADER: Would someone like to sum up for us? (No one seems to jump at the chance. The discussion leader smiles): Maybe we should call for volunteers—army style. Tom (Member No. 19), how about it?

TOM: Well . . . O.K. . . . He had a perfect right to park his car on a public street.

DISCUSSION LEADER: Wait a minute, Tom. Are you summing up the *facts* now or giving us your *opinion?* We want your opinion later. But all we're trying to do right now is to pull the key information together.

TOM: Oh, I see. Well . . . the company made a rule against parking on the public street. And Calvetti parked there. So they fired him . . . (pause)

DISCUSSION LEADER: O.K. . . . anything else? (Now comes a slightly longer pause) . . . Well, let's make this a group project. Summarizing is a tough assignment. Would anyone like to add anything?

MEMBER NO. 4: Going back to the beginning—Tom said, "The company made

a rule against parking in this particular zone"—on a public street. This so-called rule wasn't written down. . . .

MEMBER NO. 2: But everybody knew about it.

MEMBER NO. 4: Yes . . . but the company had no legal authority to make such a rule; it was in the nature of a request, since they didn't have control over the area.

MEMBER NO. 2: They provided adequate parking space for employees. And each employee agreed when he was hired that he would abide by important rules. He signed a paper. And parking was mentioned on it.[12] This employee —Calvetti—decided he would test the company's rules and authority.

DISCUSSION LEADER: Do you know that for a fact? Or are you making an inference?

MEMBER NO. 10: I think he very definitely tested the rule. He said to someone: "I'll see if they really will fire me." And he didn't move his car. It's therefore self-evident that he was testing the rule. (pause)

DISCUSSION LEADER: Anything else?

MEMBER NO. 7: Other people had parked there. But nobody else refused to move.

MEMBER NO. 12: This thing has been building up for weeks. At first, Calvetti just left his car there. But he moved it when the janitor asked him to. Later he didn't move it. Finally he refused to obey an official order from the plant superintendent. And what he said at lunch amounted to open defiance of Management authority.

MEMBER NO. 19: Calvetti had a good record before this. (pause)

DISCUSSION LEADER: Well, isn't that about it? Or does anyone want to add anything more? . . . If not. . . .

Initiating Stage 3. What Needs to Be Decided?

What's the immediate issue? What do we have to decide?

MEMBER NO. 1: Shall we fire Calvetti?

DISCUSSION LEADER (smiling): That certainly *was* an issue—at an earlier stage in the case. But haven't we got past that point now? And aren't you forgetting that we're working on this case as the impartial arbitrator? Mr. Calvetti *has* been fired. His official grievance about that Management action remains unsettled, and is now before you.

MEMBERS NO. 3 AND NO. 4 (almost simultaneously): Was the discharge justified? Should we reinstate Calvetti, or affirm the discharge?

DISCUSSION LEADER: Both of those questions bring us up to date, don't they? Which of them puts the issue most nearly in the form it would have to be decided by an impartial arbitrator?

MEMBER NO. 3: We should bring in the contract. Was Calvetti discharged for just cause?

MEMBER NO. 4: I think we have to decide first—Was the company justified in making a hard-and-fast rule about parking on a public street?

(Several members shake their heads. A few murmur "no.")

[12] That information was brought out by some of the questions omitted in this condensed report.

DISCUSSION LEADER: If we're the arbitrator?

MEMBER NO. 4: Well . . . I see. O.K.

DISCUSSION LEADER: Are we all agreed then? (Several people nod their assent. Some say "yes.") How about putting it this way: Was Mr. Calvetti discharged for "just cause"? Do you want to write that down on your opinion sheets?

Stage 4. Making and Testing Decisions

Group members now start writing. Some write rapidly and continuously. Others refer to their notes. Two members do some vigorous erasing, looking somewhat troubled. Another man, *sotto voce:* "Fire the———!"

The first papers are handed to the leader after five and six minutes, respectively, by members No. 19 and No. 20. The last ones are in after eleven minutes. (This difference in pace occasions a slight difficulty. The two members who finished first start talking to each other. This seems to disturb No. 18, who is still writing.) The leader has been sorting the papers into two piles as they come in. He now picks up one pile.

DISCUSSION LEADER: We have an almost even split on this question. Eleven for Management, ten for the Union. (He reads off the names of the opinion group which disapproves Management's action in discharging Mr. Calvetti): Do you fellows want to meet in the hall? (As they file out, he adds): Don't forget to pick a spokesman, first thing.

Members of the other opinion group move into chairs next to each other, and go into a huddle. They elect Member No. 3 (Charlie) as their spokesman. He immediately begins polling his constituents, taking notes as he goes. The tone and intensity of this consultation are in marked contrast to the previous talk. It doesn't look as though they are thinking of themselves as outsiders in this situation. Are they even remembering that their collective role assignment requires a nonpartisan attitude? They look more like executives who feel that the whole future of their company is at stake. After the main arguments in support of their case have been assembled, Member No. 8 opens up a new line of inquiry: "The question is, what will the other group say?"

MEMBER NO. 2: I bet they'll tackle us on the question of our right to restrict parking on a public street. I think the smart thing for us to do is to concede that point, right off the bat. (The spokesman nods and makes a note.) But don't you fellows agree that this admission doesn't damage our case? It's got nothing to do with the immediate issue.

MEMBER NO. 1: That's right. If Calvetti wanted to test this rule, he should have done it through the grievance procedure, instead of resorting to direct action.

(After ten minutes the door opens and the other group comes back.)

DISCUSSION LEADER: Who is your spokesman?

SEVERAL MEMBERS IN CHORUS: Tom. (He is Member No. 19.)

DISCUSSION LEADER: O.K. Tom, since your group is protesting Management's action, why don't you lead off?

TOM (summing up the case for the Union): The company had no legal right

to restrict parking on a public highway. And they had no right to ask Calvetti to sign away his civil liberties. Calvetti had his rights, the same as any employee.

Top executives are employees, too, and should set a good example. Why should they park in the restricted area?

There's nothing in Calvetti's record to show that he had been officially warned. The janitor's warning doesn't count. Calvetti's action could have been taken up through the grievance procedure. But that procedure wasn't used.

MEMBER OF THE OTHER OPINION GROUP: That's an argument against Calvetti. That's what *he* should have done—use the grievance procedure.

TOM (disregarding the interruption): Instead, somebody got hotheaded. They discriminated against Calvetti—probably because he was president of the Union.

When Calvetti signed the "Important Shop Rules" document, he promised to obey parking rules *on company property*. It would be absurd to suppose any other kind of parking could come into it.

Finally, we think the disciplinary action by the company is too harsh. The plant superintendent didn't make any effort to get at the real reasons. Calvetti might have been given a week off. Discharge, in a case like this, amounts to discrimination.

That's our case.

DISCUSSION LEADER: Thanks, Tom . . . Now, Charlie (No. 3), let's hear from you.

CHARLIE: Management will now speak. (General laughter) My colleagues and I feel there *was* just cause. We have seven reasons why the discharge should be sustained.

Incidentally, we concede that Management had no legal right to restrict parking on a public street. But we believe this question is not at issue now.

As we see it, this is a clear case of insubordination. Calvetti evidently wanted to build himself up in the eyes of rank-and-file Union members. He knowingly violated a company regulation—and not for the good of *all* employees. There's no indication that this was a test case in that sense. It was just to prove he was a big shot, like a company executive.

He had been warned three times through proper channels. And as an employee, he was just like everybody else, except that as Union president he had a greater moral responsibility, not only to the company but also to Union members, to obey the rules.

He had signed the document—"Important Shop Rules." When he deliberately disobeyed an official order, his action left the company no choice but to discharge him.

From a public relations point of view, we find the restricted parking rule perfectly reasonable. It was for the convenience of salesmen and guests.

From an employee relations angle, the company was justified in making such a restriction—for the convenience of employee's wives, in picking up their husbands, to avoid the risk of traffic accidents, and so on.

The company was very fair to Mr. Calvetti and the other employees be-

cause they provided ample parking space. All you have to do is just look at the ground plan (he points to it). When you realize how much room there was to park, and then look at the location and the small size of the restricted zone—why, that wasn't even a convenient place for Mr. Calvetti to park. That supports our point that he simply went out of his way trying to prove he was a big shot.

Finally, if the discharge is not sustained when insubordination has reached this point, the company would practically lose control over their people. Employees would know they could disregard all the rules without any penalty.

That's our case.

(During the short rebuttal that follows, further arguments are presented.)

TOM: We looked at this case from the point of view of arbitration. We assumed that an arbitrator would immediately consider the legal question that the company had no right to restrict parking on a public street.

CHARLIE: We take the view—and surely it's logical—that such a legal question isn't at issue *now*.

With reference to the charge of discrimination—I haven't had a chance to confer with my colleagues, but speaking for myself, I would say that Mr. Calvetti was not being discriminated *against*. He was asking for partiality—for discrimination *in his favor*. He's a *shoe cutter*. He doesn't *need* to use his car during working hours.

In regard to the argument that the penalty is too severe, you have to remember that he was duly warned. You can't disregard even the janitor's warning. That was a very practical way to start. They went through channels—progressively higher authority. The penalty is not too severe for such a flagrant flouting of Management authority.

(At this point, the discussion leader intervenes—just as Tom seems about to plunge in again—to lead the group forward into the final phase of discussion.)

Stage 5. What Can We Learn from the Case and from Each Other?

DISCUSSION LEADER: Let's see if we can get together on this thing. Tom, suppose you were a Union officer in that local. Wouldn't you be interested in the statement by a company spokesman—like Charlie here—that on thinking it over they concede they had no right to restrict parking on the public street?

TOM: I certainly would, but. . . .

DISCUSSION LEADER: Sorry to interrupt, but we haven't much time left and I'd like to experiment with a method of working toward agreement. You might be interested in it. Let's start by seeing what we can do to make clear-cut *recognition of differences into a step toward greater agreement*. Would you like to try making these opposed positions *stronger* by making both of them *less extreme?* Let's see if anyone here actually thinks that either Management or the Union was *wholly in the right* or *entirely in the wrong*. One way to find out is to discuss the issues that seem most decisive for each opinion group. But before we start, I'd like to propose a ground rule:

That we talk about only one issue at a time. Is that all right with everyone? (Many members signify assent.)

Fine, let's begin by listing some of the issues we've *disagreed* about. For instance, for you people (turning toward the opinion group whose decision was in favor of the Union), isn't *the civil rights issue* the central question? (Indications of general agreement)

(Turning to the Management group): Now, for you people, isn't the central issue the question of *Management's authority—maintaining discipline?* (Signs of general agreement) What other issues are important?

(Various members suggest the following topics. The discussion leader writes them on the blackboard: Resort to Direct Action; Plant Rules; Disciplinary Procedure; Grievance Procedure; Applicable Contract Provisions.)

* * * * * *

DISCUSSION LEADER: Well, as a starter, I'd like to say that although I support Management in this case, I agree 100 per cent with you people (indicating the Union group) that under the circumstances, Management has no legal right to restrict parking on a public street.

(Then, turning to the Management group): Do you fellows agree? (Several members vigorously nod their heads. Others look somewhat doubtful.)

But (turning toward the Union group) isn't this partly a matter of *timing?* And do you think the Union president was well advised *in the method* by which he chose to test the civil rights issue? Is a president serving his Union well if he takes *direct action* on such a matter, and *as a personal issue,* instead of processing it as a grievance for the Union as a whole?

TOM (spokesman for the Union group): Yes, that would have been a better way to go at it.

DISCUSSION LEADER: In what other ways might a Union test its rights on such an issue?

MEMBER: They could have appealed to the city council for a ruling.

DISCUSSION LEADER (to the Management group): If the Union had done that, what do you think would have been the outcome?

SEVERAL MEMBERS IN CHORUS: They would have won their point.

DISCUSSION LEADER: Going back to the question of direct action, could we agree on this: No employee is justified in taking direct action *except* as a last resort?

(There is a brief discussion of this point during which one member stresses the idea that sometimes direct action is justified, as, for example, in a strike. But all agree that if a Management order is reasonable, it should be obeyed first and protested afterward.)

* * * * * *

DISCUSSION LEADER (looking at his watch): Unfortunately, our time is up now. So we shan't be able to take up these other issues. But isn't this much clear, already? On the major issues we don't wholly disagree. People in each

opinion group can see there's some substance in arguments that support the other position.

At your next meeting you'll be able to get farther, because you won't have to spend time listening to explanations about the method. Next time, you can start right off with an Incident. And you'll probably bring out the facts faster, too, so you'll have more time at the end to experiment further with this technique for mutual accommodation. Or you may prefer to go straight from debate into thinking about what might be done to improve relationships after some awkward Incident, and to prevent that kind of thing from happening again.

That's all for tonight. Thank you.

* * * * * *

If you had been at this meeting, instead of just reading about it, you might now have a further opportunity to notice how a case can keep working in people's minds. For example, if you went along to the coat room, you would find some conferees still going at it, hammer and tongs. One man continues to press the question: "Did the company have any right to restrict parking on a public street?" His opponent is reiterating the argument (on another issue) that "*management's right to manage* compelled the plant superintendent to lower the boom on an employee who was openly defying management authority."

Another conferee says: "You know, I begin to realize this matter of *timing* is important. If Calvetti had used the grievance procedure in the first place, he wouldn't have landed where he did." Still another conferee remains unconvinced: "I don't know about that. Don't forget, management started the whole thing by firing Calvetti. It seems to me they were out to get the union president—a clear case of discrimination. At least the plant superintendent might have *talked things over* with Calvetti, to find out what was eating him."

* * * * * *

What Happens Later?

In many respects, this reported case discussion is typical of what happens when people use the Incident Process for the first time. In the next chapter, we indicate some of the changes—in attitudes and in outward behavior—that usually come about during a series of case discussions.

CHAPTER 7

DURING A SERIES OF CASE DISCUSSIONS, WHAT SKILLS ARE PRACTICED?

> We may not learn what we practice. But we certainly won't learn what we don't practice.[1]

Opportunities for learning are somewhat different at every phase of the Incident Process. They also vary at any given time according to the specific role of the learner. Is he working merely as a rank-and-file member, or as a discussion leader, an observer-reporter, or a course director? Other important variables include the length and range of a person's previous experience, his mental flexibility, and his readiness to learn.

Owing to such variables, the starting point, the rate, and the amount of progress differ for everyone. Also, some people come into a study group at a point far ahead of that reached by others at the end of a semester. Nevertheless, wherever a person starts, he can make progress—both in techniques of case method and in becoming increasingly case-minded.

Here's something of what can reasonably be expected at the start of a series of discussion meetings, and as members continue to work together in complementary roles for a few weeks or months.

SKILLS PRACTICED IN CONNECTION WITH INCIDENTS

Reading for Meaning

When they are first presented with a brief written Incident, most people merely skim over it. But serious case students soon learn that it pays to look into the words and search for leads toward information that they will need to work with. For example, suppose the Incident is the one

[1] W. H. Kilpatrick, *The Inquiry*, vol. II, no. 6, July–August, 1926, "The Second Asbury Park Conference: A Cooperative Analysis of 'Conferencing'," p. 43.

(given in the preceding chapter) concerning a difficulty with Mr. Calvetti, who had his own ideas about parking. Discerning readers pick up indications of *organizational relationships* offered by such titles as "foreman," "plant superintendent," "employee and president of the local union." They also note references to *previous events*, and to a spiral of response, suggested by phrases like: "had *again refused* to comply," and "*continuing to disregard* a plant rule." They glimpse *organizational issues* that show through phrases like "in the foreman's presence," "ordered him," "warned him of the consequences. . . ."

Many case students have learned that every sentence in a well-written Incident repays close attention. And since each Incident is short, even careful study doesn't require more than three or four minutes. For many people—including first-line supervisors—such intensive reading for *insight* rather than merely for *surface information* has been a new and illuminating experience.

Recognizing the Importance of Context

Case students with a reflective turn of mind also learn another semantic lesson, one which can stand them in good stead when they come up against incidents in everyday life. In case after case, they notice the difference between *reading* about the outward behavior portrayed in an incident and *understanding* how that incident could have happened. Supervisors and administrators have mentioned, as an idea that was new to them, their recognition that no incident can be understood except in the context provided by earlier developments, current trends, and issues that are central to the situation as a whole.

Selecting and Writing an Incident

To select and write an Incident [2] can be far more educational than to read one. For instance, when looking through the usual kind of case report, in search of a suitable Incident, a discussion leader can scarcely avoid noticing the "unfolding quality" of the case. He naturally asks: "Which of these climactic moments looks most promising as a starting point for discussion by our group?"

[2] Members of a study group volunteer as discussion leaders only after having discussed several cases by the Incident Process. They therefore have some idea as to what they are looking for in an Incident. In order to be effective as a starting point for a lively case discussion, an Incident should meet the following specifications: It should be *short*, not much over a hundred words. It should sketch something that *actually happened*. It should portray some *difficulty between people*, for example, a misunderstanding, or a challenge to authority. The *organizational roles* of the people immediately involved should be indicated. The *surface issues*, at the level of overt behavior, may be relatively trivial. But the *underlying issues* should be worthy of serious thought by students of social relations. Finally, the Incident should *call for a clear-cut decision.*

In trying to answer this question, he needs to think not only about the case but also about his associates in the study group. *Some key variables* are these: Their *degree of experience as case analysts.* (Is this one of our first cases? Or are we already old hands at this game?) *The nature and length of their experience in doing things with other people,* and their reasons for taking this course. (For instance, are we engineers—interested in learning something about the human factor? Are we first-line supervisors, administrators, or executives, trying to get a new angle on our organizational responsibilities?)

When a discussion leader looks for an Incident which calls for the kind of decision that might be interesting and profitable for his colleagues to make, he may see a distinction that has often been overlooked. A situation that turned into an arbitration case doesn't have to be regarded as nothing but an arbitration case. Arbitration was only one development in a sequence of events. What advantages might there be in studying that same situation either before or after a dispute was arbitrated?

A Succession of Incidents in One Case

The Calvetti Incident may serve to illustrate the possibilities. The Incident was selected at the stage of arbitration. But that same case has also proved interesting to study groups which have begun analyzing it at some earlier stage. For instance, if a discussion leader wants to bring out opportunities and limitations that exist for a first-line supervisor, he can start his group off with an Incident like this:

INCIDENT A

On Wednesday morning, George Roble (Foreman) was informed that Mr. Calvetti (an employee in his department) had again refused to comply with the janitor's request to move his car from the restricted parking zone.

PRELIMINARY ASSIGNMENT (for decision by a first-line supervisor):
In Mr. Roble's position, how might you handle this Incident?

Or, if this same case were being used in a development program for union officers, the Incident might be selected *shortly after* Mr. Roble made the decision posed for him by the foregoing Incident.

INCIDENT B

On Wednesday morning, George Roble (Foreman) informed Jack Krause, (Plant Superintendent) that Mr. Calvetti (employee and president of the local Union) had again refused to comply with a request to move his car from the restricted parking zone.

In view of the special circumstances of this case, the superintendent decided to have a talk with Mr. Calvetti. In the Foreman's presence, he explained to Mr. Calvetti the seriousness of continuing to disregard an important plant rule,

ordered him to move his car during the lunch period, and warned him of the consequences if he should refuse to obey this order.

PRELIMINARY ASSIGNMENT (for decision by a Union officer):

If you were in Mr. Calvetti's position, what action might you take—right now and later?

In order to highlight the responsibilities of a middle management representative, the Incident selected as a starting point for this case might well be written as follows:

INCIDENT C

On Wednesday morning, George Roble (Foreman) informed Jack Krause, (Plant Superintendent) that Mr. Calvetti (employee and president of the local Union) had again refused to comply with a request to move his car from the restricted parking zone.

In view of the special circumstances of this case, the superintendent decided to have a talk with Mr. Calvetti. In the Foreman's presence, he explained to Mr. Calvetti the seriousness of continuing to disregard an important plant rule, ordered him to move his car during the lunch period, and warned him of the consequences if he should refuse to obey this order.

Shortly after lunch, the Foreman called the superintendent to say that Mr. Calvetti had not moved his car, and that, during the lunch period, he had been reported as saying to a group of employees: "I'm going to see if they'll fire me if I don't move my car."

PRELIMINARY ASSIGNMENT (for administrative decision):

If you were in the position of the Plant Superintendent, at this juncture, what action might you take:

1. Within the next few hours, and
2. At leisure, after having made the decision as to how to handle Mr. Calvetti right now?

Making It Dramatic

In selecting and preparing an Incident, most discussion leaders naturally focus on a single short-term aim. They want to make their Incident dramatic, so that it will stir curiosity and trigger off questions. Many people have agreed that this shouldn't be difficult. When the Incident was happening, there was a quality of drama—at least for the people whose feelings were involved. How can this quality be recaptured? Quotations are often useful. Can a conversation be reproduced so that case students may feel as though they are actually listening to it? Role playing is a way of doing this. And one of our students developed his own means to this end. The consequences of that experiment might be described as an incident involving an Incident.

What about This Incident?

Toward the end of a seminar course in 1957, a discussion leader was determined to introduce some novelties. One of these was designed to make studying the Incident a dramatic experience. Instead of writing the Incident, he prepared a tape recording in which two voices could be heard talking over the telephone. When the group met, he invited them to set to work in the collective role of a wire tapper. He then played his tape—with instant success. The group was intrigued by the novelty and interested in the telephone conversation. When asked whether they would like to hear it again, their response was enthusiastic. And it seemed clear (to the teacher) that the second time they listened even more closely than they had the first time. Everyone jotted down notes.

Then there was an immediate outburst of questions about facts. But considerable confusion was evident. After a couple of minutes someone asked: "Who are we supposed to be?" It then became apparent that the discussion leader hadn't worked out any *role assignment* for case analysis. But he did so on the spot, inviting the group to think about the case in the role of the owner-manager (one of the speakers in the Incident). In accepting this different assignment, his fellow students had to reorient themselves, since wire tapping had nothing to do with the case.

What did that discussion leader learn from the difficulty which occurred in connection with his Incident? Unfortunately, we don't know.

What did the observer-reporter make of it? Perhaps it won't surprise you to hear that he looked for—and found—evidence that effective preparation by "the team" (his partner and himself) had paid off for the group. In his report, he referred to the "confusion" and the "many repeat questions" in fact finding. But he explained those difficulties by saying that "most of the group were not familiar with" the kind of situation reported in the case. He omitted to mention the question: "Who are we supposed to be?"

The teacher had his own views about this incident. Here was a team that had gone all out for drama. And the group had responded enthusiastically to the novel approach. But how had it happened that the discussion leader had treated *the stage of studying the Incident* as though it were not part of an integral process of case analysis? And how could the observer have failed to mention the question that elicited the missing role assignment? One of the chief questions left in the teacher's mind was this: Can we find an acceptable way of drawing attention to the partisan attitude in an observer-reporter which operates as selective perception and tends to interfere with objective reporting?

The possibility of learning from any incident depends in large measure on questions asked afterward. In the Incident Process, what can be—

and demonstrably has been—learned from repeated experiences in following up clues by questioning?

GETTING AND ORGANIZING FACTUAL INFORMATION

Most people enter study groups with little understanding as to what material is needed for an adequate case report. Therefore, it is only natural that questioning about the first few cases is relatively inefficient and unsystematic. If members are also inexperienced as coworkers in a discussion group, the search for information is likely to be hampered by ineffective teamwork. In the first few case discussions, few people follow through on questions asked by their colleagues. And there is usually little evidence of attentive listening to anyone except "the man with the facts." But greater efficiency in fact finding usually comes rapidly. By the fifth or sixth meeting, the reporter's table of group questioning often shows relatively systematic and cooperative work.

When a reporter's table shows that members worked *together* efficiently in asking questions about one topic at a time, it is apparent that the situation has become quite different from what it is when "partial facts dangle in air" (to quote again a bit of case material used in Chapter 5). What is accountable for such a change in work method?

Leadership: Formal and Informal

One factor that makes a difference in all groups is *leadership*, exercised both formally and informally. At one of the first meetings, a course director may suggest experimenting with some systematic search pattern; for example, by looking into typical factors (such as *space-time conditions and relationships*; *technical features* of the case; and the *human factor*, as expressed in behavior and in personal relationships). But in our experience, such a suggestion from an *appointed leader* has never been spontaneously adopted all at once by the group at large. When it takes effect, it does so first in the minds of a few natural leaders. If they take it up, try it out, and comment favorably on it, others are likely to follow their lead.

What each member does as a discussion leader can also make quite a difference to the group. For example, by mastering available information about a case, a discussion leader prepares to meet his responsibilities in stage 2 of the Incident Process. And one important part of his preparation consists in deciding what information—if any—should be put on paper, ready for distribution as attachments, because it cannot so easily be understood or referred to if given orally. When a leader's answers, both written and oral, are well prepared, accurate, and as concise as is com-

patible with completeness, then he has learned something about assimilating information, and has done his share as a leader in fact finding.

By taking his turn as an observer-reporter, a case student can again play a leading role in helping his colleagues to become more efficient as fact finders. Each official observer-for-the-day is in a favorable position to notice the "repeat questions" and the lack of follow-through which are evidences (and consequences) of random, individualistic questioning. He is also well placed to recognize the advantages of any systematic and cooperative work that is done in bringing out the facts of a case. As the following comment shows, an observant and analytically minded reporter may be able to make a practical recommendation:

> There is a period following the more obvious questions, and just before the exhaustion of key facts, when the group slows down. For instance, questions 60 through 69 monopolized almost a third of the questioning period, yet contributed almost nothing to the subsequent decision. At this point, the group is forced into deeper analysis, which obviously requires more time. One suggestion for speeding up the work during this period would be for some member of the class to volunteer a brief (very brief) synopsis of the key facts uncovered up to that time.

This suggestion for making an interim summary was adopted in that group. And it proved to be a time saver.

Taking Stock and Making Plans

Reports and recommendations by successive observers are likely to become most effective when discussed at one of the stock-taking meetings. At the first such meeting (perhaps after four or five case discussions) accomplishments and requirements in fact finding have often been the chief topic. And by the second stock-taking meeting, the record often shows that the study group has picked up speed in getting facts. (Many groups have soon learned to cut in half the time spent in bringing out available information.) However, experience plainly indicates that *organizing information* is much harder than picking it up.

Acquiring Skill in Summarizing

Relatively few people find it easy to make an off-the-cuff summary that is concise, complete, and objective. And the conditions for summarizing are especially difficult when the material to be summed up is a large mass of information, brought out by random questioning that may have gone on for as much as half an hour. Many people who enroll in case study groups have had little or no experience in meeting that kind of assignment. Nor have they considered why summarizing is often needed if group talk is to get somewhere.

Naturally, therefore, when a course director asks for a summary in the first case discussion, his request is likely to act as a "stopper" [3]—at least for a large majority of the group. And in the efforts of the first volunteer summarizers, self-confidence is frequently more noticeable than ability to do the work. For these reasons, the first summaries, before they are edited by other members, rarely meet high standards. However, during a series of meetings the quality of summaries usually improves markedly. How does this change come about?

Every member in a study group can, if he chooses, get considerable practice in making summaries. The record shows that many case students have made something of this opportunity. And each member has a special incentive to do his best in making an oral summary, because he knows that his associates are paying close attention to what he says, and will pitch in to edit his remarks if they find his summary inadequate.

Noticing Differences in Quality

A frequent shortcoming in summarizing is outlining an opinion [4] rather than making a digest of objectively verifiable information. Other qualitative differences between summaries apparently make some impression even on people who have given little thought to what constitutes an effective summary. But many people who have appraised one summary as better than another have been stumped when asked: In what respects was it better?

Tackling the Job in Different Roles

In learning to summarize (as with all other skills practiced during a succession of meetings), a favoring factor is doing the job—and thinking about it—in several different roles. For instance—

Special opportunities in the role of discussion leader. In preparing a case for group discussion, a leader can test and practice his skill in making a written summary of all available information about a case.[5] And once a person has gone all out in trying to write a summary, he is likely to have more ideas in future about summarizing.

Also, when each leader-for-the-day supervises a group discussion on a case, part of his job is to stimulate and direct the efforts of his colleagues

[3] For an explanation of this term, see Irving J. Lee, *How to Talk with People*, pp. 93–95.

[4] See p. 152, for an illustration of that tendency.

[5] If he is using a plan prepared by someone else, he is expected to edit the summary written into that plan. If he is drawing on his own experience in preparing a case, he is expected to write his own summary. In either event, favoring conditions are that he can work from written material, can pin down and revise his thinking in writing, and can spend much more time on the job than is available to anyone during a discussion meeting.

to make an oral summary which will highlight key facts that need to be worked with, in later phases of analysis. In trying to help them do a good job, he may get new insight into difficulties, techniques, and standards of summing up orally.

Two other roles offer special opportunities. The role of an observer-for-the-day, and still more the position of a course director, provide vantage points for noticing differences in performance by summarizers. And in both these roles, a case student naturally analyzes what he notices, in relation to what he regards as functional requirements. For example, the following questions have been raised by observer-reporters and discussed by their associates in various study groups.

Questions about Summaries

1. *What preliminary work facilitates the job of making a final summary of informal talk?* Among the suggestions that have been made and adopted are these: jotting down key information as it is disclosed; systematically exploring one area at a time; making interim summaries which bring together the gist of what has been said about a case so far.

2. *What are some of the ways in which our summaries have most often failed to meet requirements?* The following answers have been given and discussed at stock-taking meetings:

   a. A summary isn't much help if it's a lengthy retelling of the whole story.

   b. A so-called summary doesn't do much for us if it's a chronological account rather than a logical digest. (A peculiarly unhelpful variant of the chronological approach is that taken by a student who retraces the steps by which he learned about the case, starting with the Incident, and ending with the beginning of the case.)

   c. A summary doesn't meet requirements if it leaves out many of the items that could properly be classified as key facts.

   d. A summary may be worse than useless if it is seriously incomplete and sharply slanted.[6]

What Is the Function of a Summary, as a Step in Case Analysis?

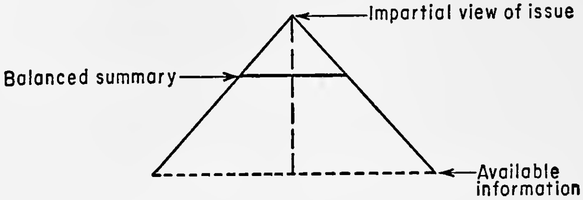
When case students discuss summarizing as a suboperation in case analysis, two different effects of a final summary may be clarified by diagraming.

For example, a complete and perfectly objective summary would pro-

[6] No summary that we ever heard, or made, was entirely free from bias. Therefore, judgments about slanting can properly be made only on the degree of partisanship that is apparent. A practical test of slanting can be made by a listener who tries to predict from a summary of facts what the summarizer's decision will be (for action to cope with the Incident in that case).

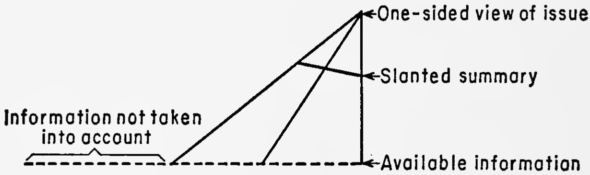
ceed straight upward from the base of available information. And it would point toward a balanced (impartial) view of *what is at issue in the case as a whole.*

Diagram of an Objective Summary



An incomplete and slanted summary shows the effect of *selective perception.* It omits information which does not support the summarizer's preconceived opinion. Such a summary interprets factual information in a way that favors one side of the case.

Diagram of an Incomplete and Slanted Summary



Such diagrams may help to clarify the questions: In case analysis, what is the function of a final summary of factual information? Do we sum up in order to support a decision that has already been made? Or is the function of a summary to serve as a bridge between a mass of unorganized factual material and a (relatively) impartial view of what needs to be decided?

Other Questions

In some study groups no one except the course director has been interested in other questions which might be raised about summarizing. For example—

What potential advantages can be derived from initial difficulties with summarizing? (Here are two of them. If the person who sums up in the first case makes an exceedingly incomplete and slanted summary, he provides both opportunity and stimulus for other members to pitch in and make improvements. When a member realizes that summing up is difficult, he is more likely to take advantage of the opportunity, offered to a discussion leader, to work at this job under more favorable conditions.)

If a case student, when functioning as an observer-reporter, recognizes the difficulties of making an oral summary of informal talk, will he make practical suggestions for doing better work? Will he find an acceptable way to communicate his ideas? Will he try to adopt some of his own recommendations when he works (as a rank-and-file discussion member) at trying to sum up facts?

Finally, *why is it that so many case students seem to forget about the final summary as soon as it has been made?* Perhaps they regard summarizing as nothing more than a technical requirement which, having been met, is of no further use. Is that why they don't draw on it at the next stage of analysis?

THINKING ABOUT ISSUES

Apparently, many people have given little thought even to what the term "issue" denotes.[7] Experience in study groups also indicates that even fewer people consistently try to determine what seems to be at issue in current situations where they are responsible for making decisions.

Because the idea and the practice of issue formulation seem to be unfamiliar to many people, a course director is often up against a tough assignment in trying to stimulate and direct this kind of close analytical work. How can he most effectively do this part of his job?

It's Up to the Director at the Start

Experience suggests that a formal issue for arbitration is easier to see clearly and to state precisely than the kind of issue which often confronts an administrator, who must make a decision after an Incident.[8] For this reason, among others, we recommend starting off by analyzing a few cases at the stage when they have become arbitration cases. But even in such a formal dispute case, there may be sharply differing opinions as to what the issue is.[9]

[7] Evidence for that assertion has repeatedly been provided when someone has overlooked the difference between *an inquiry about facts* (for example: "Was enough parking space provided so that all employees could leave their cars near the plant without using the restricted zone?") and *the kind of question which points to a need for decision* (for instance, "Did Mr. Calvetti do anything that merited discipline?").

[8] In order to keep this section within bounds, we now center attention on the formulation of an arbitrable issue. Our current way of working on issues for an administrative decision is suggested in other parts of this book; for example, in the case *A Last-minute Request for Time Off* (see Recap of Part Two), and in *The Life of Reilly* (see pp. 104–106). It is illustrated in detail in Paul and Faith Pigors, *Director's Manual: The Incident Process—Case Studies for Management Development.*

[9] Representatives of unions and managements often have great difficulty in agreeing on what constitutes the crux of their dispute. Therefore an arbitrator's first assignment may be to help work out a mutually acceptable formulation of the issue.

Applying This Technique to a Case

For example, in relation to the Calvetti Incident, you may remember the range of suggestions (as to the issue) offered by members in a study group. The first one, "Shall we fire Calvetti?" is typical of where many people start when asked to clarify an issue. But when a study group has been asked to work on that case as an impartial arbitrator, most members can readily recognize—after it has been pointed out to them—why the question about discharging Mr. Calvetti is untimely. It was management's decision on that issue which set off the grievance process that led to arbitration.

Even one experience of case analysis in a group may offer convincing evidence that unless people agree on the critical question which they are undertaking to answer in their decision, the subsequent discussion is unlikely to be more than a bull session. With a little leadership, a group can usually agree upon a general statement of an issue that could properly be decided by an arbitrator. Some groups like to spell it out by starting with something like this: "In view of established facts and under the existing labor agreement. . . ." [10] Sometimes those ideas are merely implied, as in the statement: "Was Mr. Calvetti discharged for 'just cause'?"

This Is Related Thinking

A more difficult job in connection with issues is factoring out the interlinking aspects, or related issues,[11] on which a reasoned decision can be based. At the first meeting of a case study group, there is usually little interest in formulating issues. But after a few reports from observers have been studied, members usually accept the idea that it may be worth while to work out issues in each case *before* making any decision about action.

Leading Members Can Help

During most discussion meetings, group members are usually concentrating on a remote case, the one in which they are deciding what they might have thought if they had been called on to make a decision under those circumstances. But when they study an observer's report, they are

[10] Often, after having worked out some such form of words in several cases, students indicate that they regard it as nothing more than an empty formula: "You know, that stuff about 'in view of. . . .' " Is this perhaps a sign that it's time to switch from arbitration cases to situations which call for decisions by supervisors and administrators?

[11] Is it clear what we are talking about here? If not, you might look at the diagram on p. 198. It represents our picture of interlinking issues in the case of *A Last-minute Request for Time Off*. In the case involving Mr. Calvetti, a similar diagram might be made of the following interrelated questions: applicable contract clauses, supervisory responsibilities, civil rights, the disciplinary process, the grievance procedure, obligations of a rank-and-file employee, and the role of a union president.

looking at what he heard them say and at his tabulation of group reasoning when members stated what they did think. (Naturally, in connection with this kind of report—as with others—the person who learns most from it is likely to be the person who makes it.)

When a student, working as observer-reporter, studies the opinions written by his associates, he can see that the reasons (given to support decisions) might have been clarified, for the group at large, as questions —or issues—about interrelated features of the case. But often only a few of them were mentioned before people got together to help a spokesman prepare a strong case. Sometimes it has been only while tabulating group reasoning that a case student recognized the potential advantages of drawing on "the wisdom of the group" (as to what is at stake in each case) before making his own decision. (That possibility has special appeal to any reader of an observer's report who realizes that, in forming an opinion, he overlooked some aspect of the case which he later recognized as important.)

When an observer recommends doing more work (or working differently) on issues, the suggestion, *coming from him* (an insider), is more likely to be favorably considered than if made by a teacher. Similarly, a hint about where to look for material on issues is more likely to be adopted if it comes from "one of us." Here's a suggestion that has been made, sometimes during a discussion meeting (by a leader-for-the-day) and sometimes afterward (in an observer's report): *Since the summary was a relatively complete statement of key facts, why don't we use that as a source of ideas about issues?*

Some study groups have made a major project of working on this phase of case analysis. But before that has happened, the matter of issues has usually been made the central topic in one of the meetings devoted to taking stock and making plans.

Reflecting on the Function of Issue Formulation

Anyone can see—if he will look—that there is a close relationship between the way in which a person visualizes what is at issue (in a given case) and the decision which represents his answer for "action now." A stock-taking meeting offers a favorable opportunity to consider (1) the nature of this relationship, and (2) the possibility that thinking about what is at stake in a situation may be a practical way to build second thoughts into a decision.

The following are among the questions that have been raised: Does a person's view of what is at issue largely predetermine his decision because it defines the scope and direction of his thinking from then on? Or is it perhaps the other way around? Does the way in which a person *states an issue* indicate the general nature of the decision that *he has already made*

—perhaps without being fully conscious of having done so? Or might there be some validity in both those hypotheses? What if decisions are made partly at the level of conscious thought, with some use of reason, and partly at the subconscious level? Might conscious effort to think about what seems to be at stake in a given situation be a practical device for pretesting and improving a decision-in-the-making?

It would be pleasant to report that each member of every study group had thought about such questions and worked out his own answers. Unfortunately, that hasn't been the case—to date. But we think there is evidence that once a person starts thinking about issue formulation as a technique of analysis that might pay off for him, the quality of his decisions and reasoning is likely to improve.

CHANGES MADE IN WORKING ON DECISIONS AND REASONING

During a series of discussion meetings, there are usually marked changes in the attitudes, assumptions, and skills displayed in making decisions and in expressing reasoned opinions. Often members of a study group differ widely in their ability to reason and in the wish to improve their capacity to state a reasoned opinion. But most people start with some attitudes and assumptions which could profitably be modified, and with skills which they can and do improve.

Working on Reasoning

Many people come into a study group having had little previous experience in briefly and explicitly stating their reasons for arriving at a given decision. Often, at first, some members apparently see no difference between a decision and a reason.[12] But some improvement in expressing reasons usually comes quite soon. For instance, by the third or fourth meeting it is relatively rare that anyone forgets to write on his opinion sheet statements which he, at least, regards as reasons. And when reporters have commented unfavorably on the form of written papers, better organization of written opinions has often followed. Some case students have said that trying to present a clear-cut written opinion has helped them to think more clearly while they were making their decision.

[12] Evidence for that assertion is provided by the many opinion sheets handed in by case students with nothing on them but decisions, even though the writers have just been reminded that they are expected to outline their reasons. Further evidence is given by other papers in which decisions and reasoning are intermingled, without paragraphing or other indication that the writer sees any distinction between them. And a similar blurring between decisions and reasons often shows up during discussion.

Some Obstacles Disappear

Before there has been time for friendly relationships to develop, certain negative feelings are likely to make it difficult for people to *work together* on their reasoning. Two such feelings are touchiness about criticism (many people seem to feel that criticism is necessarily destructive) and suspicion of other people's motives.

This second feeling has been most noticeable in adult study groups whose members are taking the course as part of a management development program. At first, members may feel reluctant to sign the opinion sheets (on which they have been asked to write their decisions and reasoning). Whether or not such apprehension is openly stated, questions that need to be answered by a training director are these: "Why are we asked to sign these papers? Will this information be used against us? For instance, will someone show my paper to my boss, as proof that I'm a sloppy reasoner?" Such questions are based on fears, misunderstandings, and assumptions that can quickly be dispelled in a study group. Even at the first meeting, members can see that having signed papers to work from makes it quicker for a leader to help them get sorted into opinion groups. And a course director can reassure them that all this material will be treated as confidential. But even more important is the feeling of security which usually develops fast during case discussions. Many people soon see that when discussion is part of their work method, stating differences of opinion needn't lead to trouble. In fact, bringing differences into the open can be made into an effective step toward a group opinion —a consensus that is more effectively organized and supported by reasons than was any component individual opinion.

Also, after a few experiences of crystallizing their reasoning (by jotting down their opinions) and of threshing out reasons (by conferring with others of like mind), many people get beyond the assumption that opinions about social situations are likely to be 100 per cent right or wrong. At first someone may oversimplify by saying that so-and-so "made the right decision, but for the wrong reasons." Yet many case students have soon discarded both these labels in favor of the idea that most opinions could be improved in some respect and that few people are all wrong in their reasoning. Some students have become interested in following up questions like these: "What were the strong points in the reasoning presented by a dissenting minority?" "In what respects, and why, was our spokesman's statement more effective than the reasoning that I outlined (in writing) to support the same decision?"

A Case Student Has Special Opportunities as an Observer-Reporter

If all case students spontaneously asked that kind of question, there would be less opportunity (and less need) for constructive work by each student when he takes his turn as an official observer. But it seems that relatively few people enter case study groups prepared to analyze their own performance. Therefore, each member who undertakes the job of observer may get (and communicate) ideas about reasoning, ideas that he didn't have when he started the course. Here's how it can work.

Usually, the official observer is the only person who studies all the opinion sheets that are written about the case presented by his partner. And part of his job is to make a Table of Group Reasoning. In doing this tabulating he can't help noticing whether there are any papers which (1) contain no reasons, or (2) give the same reason to support different decisions, or (3) offer as a reason some feeling or even some statement that is contrary to fact. And every observer is expected to look for material which can be quoted as a model because the written reasoning is clear, consistent, well organized, realistic, and concise.

As he does this analytical work (part of his preparation for reporting to the group) an observer can do himself a favor as a reasoner. An ambitious case student can give himself an intensive experience in related thinking if he makes full use of case material that is available to him as an official observer. For instance, he can correlate what was done (at various stages of a case discussion) by the persons who were elected as spokesmen. By studying the notes he took during fact finding, an observer can single out the questions asked by each (future) spokesman. Perhaps his notes will also indicate that certain items of information apparently struck that person as specially significant. Other parts of his record should tell him: What, if anything, that person said during the stage of issue formulation. Also, what did he write as his individual opinion? After being elected as a spokesman, what did he do to inform himself about the opinions of his constituents? Finally, how did his oral statement, as spokesman, differ from the opinion which he wrote, a few minutes earlier, by himself?

In trying to understand the workings of any mind, an observer soon gets beyond the limits of precise knowledge. But once he starts paying close attention, he at least gives himself a chance to learn something. If he then tries to report on what he thinks he has seen, in a situation where his observations and opinions can be checked by other participants, he is using a tested means of self-education. And if he asks himself: "How does a person make up his mind?" he may be stimulated to reexamine some of his own mental habits.

Has every student, when functioning as an observer-reporter, made full

use of all his opportunities for learning and for teaching? Well—no. We haven't got that far yet. Apparently most people find informal talk far more congenial than thinking out and writing out reports. This preference is given scope in the kind of conferring that takes place immediately after case students have handed in their opinion sheets.

Practicing Skills of Committee Work

What gets done in the huddles feels more like play than like work. Perhaps this is one reason why so many people have put so much into this stage of the Incident Process and got so much out of it. Certainly, many observers have been struck by evidences of enlistment, and have thought that this feeling had something to do with the high quality of what gets done in many huddles.

When people who have reached the same decision (about a case) work together to crystallize and consolidate their reasoning, *conditions are favorable for everyone to do more, as a reasoner, than he could do by himself.* Two favoring conditions are these: First, a decision has already been defined and agreed upon. Therefore, no one needs to spend any energy trying to defend his decision. Instead, each may feel free to explore the whole range of reasoning that can be developed by all members of the opinion group. Second, everyone in the subgroup has a stake in preparing the strongest possible case to support their mutual decision. And a natural way to work on that assignment is to examine and weigh what each member sees as most decisive.

What Can a Spokesman Learn?

What can be learned by an spokesman naturally depends on the way he looks at his assignment and how he tries to meet it. For example, sometimes a spokesman has thrown away the chance to broaden and test his opinion because he saw the huddle mainly as a chance to rehearse "his" speech. Other people have made good use of the opportunity to poll their constituents, trying to assess and assimilate the full range of reasoning.

A spokesman can test and practice a variety of skills when the time comes to speak for his opinion group. How effectively can he organize and present different reasons? How interested, and how able, is he to speak as a representative? Does he also make an effort to work with people in other opinion groups (perhaps by conceding a strong point in their case)?

Opportunities to Learn by Listening, during the Brief Debate

People who have listened to the informal talk in huddles have noticed how much it differs, in tone and in productivity, from the brief formal debate between spokesmen. But listening to a spokesman can be illuminating, too. Does the partisan attitude typical of members in different

opinion groups appear to work against receptiveness to new ideas? Can partisanship sharpen the capacity to listen with discernment? Many case students who have scoffed at the need to make fine verbal distinctions have been quick to notice whether their spokesman used the pronoun "I" or "we." They also tend to pay close attention to the question: "Is he doing justice to our case?"

Here's an example. On one occasion a spokesman was supposedly representing an opinion group of nine members. During his speech—liberally sprinkled with I's—there were signs of growing restlessness among his constituents. Finally, one of them spoke up: "May I make a minority report?" His request was granted and after a quick huddle with other members, he began by saying: "I represent a minority of eight."

We don't know whether the displaced spokesman learned anything from that experience. But many people have said that by alternately serving as a spokesman and appraising performance by other spokesmen, they learned something about what it takes to speak acceptably and effectively *for* other people.

Taking Stock of Decision Making

After several members of a study group have had a chance to work as official observers, they have sometimes gotten together to play a leading role at a stock-taking meeting. Either on the spur of the moment or after advance work as a special report committee, they are in a position to raise relevant questions about the decision-making process. For instance—"Does the process of making decisions seem to be purely rational—even when the issue for decision is posed by a remote case?" "What about the following generalization: 'Reason only states the case without deciding it. What is it in us that passes upon the facts which reason cites . . . seeming to have jurisdiction over reason itself, to call it into action and to appraise its testimony?' "[13] "If feelings and 'hunches' come into it, are they wholly beyond our control?" "Might our decisions about cases become more reasonable if we always outlined our reasoning *before* writing our decisions, instead of the other way round?"

What Does a Discussion Leader Do in This Stage of Case Analysis?

When a student knows that he will be responsible for leading a case discussion, he naturally works out his own opinion about the case in advance while preparing his plan. Later, when the group works on the case, he has the same opportunities that others have to modify his opinions in some respect. While he listens, he may also get glimpses of what looks like selective perception, affecting decisions in other minds. But while

[13] Joseph Lee, *Play in Education*, p. xi.

leading discussion, he has little time for reflecting on what he notices. He's kept busy supervising the work in progress and getting ready for the next step.

For instance, during the brief debate between spokesmen, he has the double responsibility of serving as moderator and also of trying to pick up leads for helping the group to move forward into the culminating phase of case analysis. In order to meet that dual assignment, he must listen for more than what a partisan-minded member says or pays attention to. For example, does the tone of the talk suggest that tension is reaching the point where he should intervene (as moderator) or even cut short the debate? Or can he detect any signs that there is more agreement, within the group as a whole, than now seems to be felt by people who are aligned against each other in different opinion groups?

Many case students have said that in trying to meet requirements at this stage of the game, they had a fruitful experience in committee chairmanship.

PRACTICING SKILLS OF REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

The work reserved for the final phase of analysis in the Incident Process can be more valuable than any of the preceding stages. But often it doesn't seem to amount to much. Yet observers' reports indicate that many people have shown a growing interest [14] in taking a long view of cases, and some gain in the skill of making generalizations that seem valid in a variety of cases.

What seems to be accountable for meager accomplishment at the start of a series of discussion meetings and for growing interest and ability during a few weeks or months?

Limiting Factors

At first, the *time factor* limits everyone who uses the Incident Process. Before people become familiar with techniques of case method, they need practically all of a two-hour period to make and discuss short-term decisions. The *mood of debating* can also prevent people from taking a long view of any case. If even one member is unable to shake off feelings of combativeness, he may block or interrupt discussion of general ideas because he is determined to push his own decision for immediate action (after the Incident). Often, too, *lack of practice in the art of reflecting* is associated with lack of skill.

[14] One indication of increased interest in this mode of thinking is given when observers keep track of the time spent in each of the five phases of case discussion. Often the time span of stage 5 has increased from five or ten minutes, at the start of a series, to half an hour or more by the sixth or seventh meeting.

For example, when invited to make recommendations for preventing a difficulty (which obviously made some participant feel that a trifling incident was the last straw), beginners at case method have sometimes offered such verbalizations as these: "Where personality conflicts exist, management should remove the cause of the conflicts." "Do a good human relations job, from first-line supervisors on up the line." "Substitute co-operation for conflict."

However, limiting forces are not the whole story.

Favoring Forces

As the "spiral of response" brings changes in the work situation and in case students (as participants), all the factors mentioned as limits at the start may become increasingly favorable.

For instance, as students become more efficient in gathering and organizing factual information about a case, they do the job faster. So, there's more time left toward the end of the discussion period. Often, too, the practice of limiting the debate to spokesmen (instead of having a free-for-all) has helped people to cultivate their capacity for nonpartisan listening. And since the Incident Process calls for some generalized thinking about every case that is discussed, constant practice tends to bring out latent interest and skill. Also, in volunteering for each of the principal leading roles, every case student is undertaking to try and stimulate his associates to reflect on a situation (either a remote case or the case of the study group itself). Experience in doing those jobs suggests that here, as so often, the best way to learn is (trying) to teach.

Opportunities for Student Leaders

In making a plan to lead the final phase of a case discussion, each student is expected to ask himself questions like these: "How can I help my associates to take a long view of this case? Could we move toward agreement about this case, after the debate, by asking: 'Now that we've decided how to cope with this Incident, what flaws in the situation remain to be thought about—from a preventive angle?' Or, 'Now that we can look back over this whole case (including the actual decision made by participants, immediately after the Incident), what seems most significant if we're looking for clues to productive interaction?' "

Sometimes it has been only in thinking up questions that might discourage negative criticism, and stir other people to take a long view of a case, that a student has first realized how interesting a case can look, and how instructive it can be from that angle.

In the role of observer-reporter, each student has another opportunity to help prepare for generalized thinking about a case. If his partner hasn't been able to interest the group in searching for operative princi-

ples in the "tangled skein" of events in a given case, the report can give them a second chance. For instance, a reporter may list (or invite his associates to list) the general principles, discussed in connection with this case, that also seem valid in other cases previously discussed. Or perhaps a reporter will stress the general idea that asking "what seems to have been accountable?" is more profitable in the long run than any general proposition that can be derived from a single case.

WHAT IS THE TEACHER'S JOB?

It has often been asked: If student leaders do so much in your study groups, is there anything important left for a teacher to do? In Chapter 2 we touched on that point. Now we can give a more specific answer. In doing so, we divide the question into two parts. First, what can a teacher appropriately do? Second, what can he try to learn?

What Can a Teacher Do?

As soon as possible after helping a group get started, a teacher can begin to work himself out of *the* leading role. From then on, he can best serve group members by being on tap and by supplementing what other people do.

Often a teacher may seem to function only as a production worker: asking questions, and writing his opinion on cases that are presented by student leaders, cases which are just as new to the teacher as to any other member of the group. At other times, the teacher can be useful as a pinch hitter (for instance, if some discussion leader is unable to present a case on schedule, or if an observer-reporter is absent); as a coach (if a discussion leader or observer-reporter wants advice); as a source of specialized information; as a technical consultant (on case method, or perhaps on techniques of group dynamics or General Semantics); or as a member or chairman of a committee (on some special project).

Whatever else he is doing, a teacher can also serve as a representative of long-term aims (such as learning about productive interaction); as an observant participant (supplementing the activity of part-time observers by noticing and appraising performance through a whole series of meetings); [15] and as "generalizer-in-chief" (with the central responsibility of learning from experience with each study group).

To meet requirements (as a student of social relations) in the last

[15] For this purpose, we strongly recommend "The Critical Incident Technique," developed by John C. Flanagan, as an appraisal technique to be used by supervisors. (See Appendix II.) In brief, that method consists in keeping track of objectively verifiable evidence as to "effective" and "ineffective" behavior on the job. Among the advantages of this method, when used by a teacher, are these: (1) Planning to jot down notes after each meeting helps him to pay close attention to the situation of the study group during

three aspects of his multiple role, a teacher is responsible for practicing techniques that favor mutual accommodation. One such technique can be experimented with immediately after the brief debate which usually winds up the stage of short-term decisions in the Incident Process. In trying to help people establish the largest possible area of agreement (as a discussion leader does, at this point), he is fortunate if he knows in advance what the range of opinions is likely to be.[16] Equipped with such foreknowledge, and aided by earlier experiments made with other groups which have discussed this same case, a discussion leader can expect to get increasingly good results when he presents certain features of each different opinion as leads toward agreement with people in another opinion group. (A start on that assignment was described in Chapter 6.)

This Kind of Teaching Is Partly Managing

Another way to look at the job of such a course director is by considering its managerial aspects. It has often been said that managing is teaching. Isn't it equally true that, *when case method is used, teaching is managing*? Or to put it more precisely, when the aim of teaching is to stimulate and direct self-education in other people, and productive interaction with other people, the job of a teacher has much in common with that of a Manager. For example, a course director who uses the Incident Process carries out such recognized management functions as planning, organizing, delegating, coordinating, and appraising. Here's how he can do it.

Planning. A teacher makes plans for every course in which he hopes to get results with other people. At best, these plans differ for each group. And planning can become increasingly effective as experiments indicate which ways of doing things seem most productive and as other members become enlisted as fellow planners.

Organizing. A preliminary step in organizing any kind of work is to

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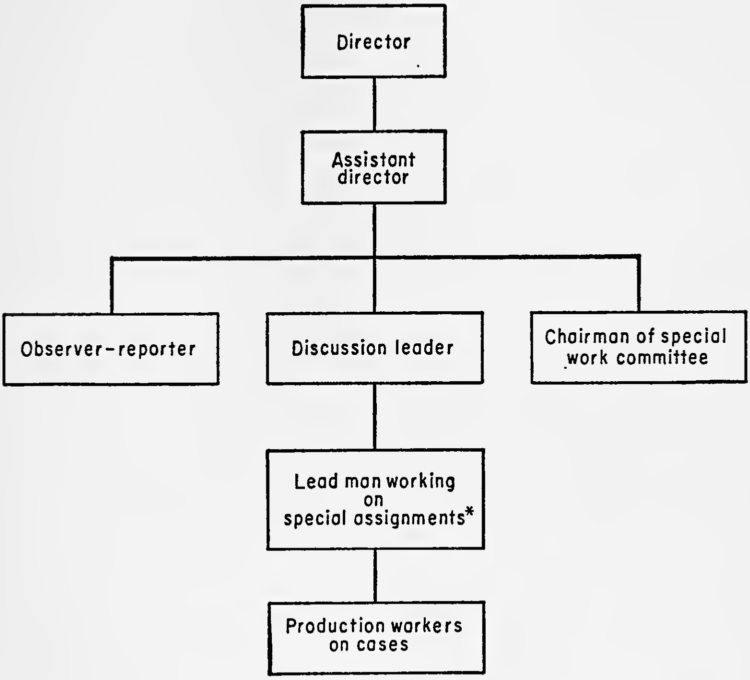
the meeting, and not to become wholly absorbed in the remote case which is being discussed. (2) Such notes may be useful to supplement the findings of other observers for discussions at stock-taking meetings. (3) It can help him to review a course when it is over and he is trying to learn all he can from it.

[16] That kind of foresight can be gained by presenting a given case a number of times in different groups. In spite of individual differences in reasoning, a general pattern of opinions soon emerges. Even without having presented a case before, an experienced teacher can roughly predict what opinions will be formed by people who can lay claim to a fair amount of horse sense. In relation to any actual situation, only a few decisions are realistic. And these decisions can properly be supported by only a limited number of reasons. But a rough prediction can be confirmed and often refined by studying several tables that show group reasoning on a given case.

structure the work requirements, for example, by making an organization chart. In a study group where the Incident Process is used, functional roles [17] can be diagramed as follows:

Organization Chart of a Study Group *



* The only term that seems to need explanation is that of "special assignments." Among these we include the following ways in which group Members can upgrade themselves to the position of "lead man": (1) picking up clues by studying an Incident; (2) asking key questions and listening attentively; (3) helping to define immediate issues; (4) stating clear-cut decisions, and contributing to the work of crystallizing and consolidating a group opinion (especially in the role of spokesman); and (5) helping to identify issues that are of central importance not only in a given case but also for any social situation.

When it comes to staffing, all the positions (except that of the course director) are filled in rotation by volunteers. The length of the course, as well as the caliber and interest of group members, are variables that determine how many people will rise to the level of "middle management."

Delegating. In delegating certain responsibilities to part-time leaders,

[17] For a different kind of role structure, applicable to any discussion group, see Kenneth D. Benne and Paul Sheats, "Spotlight on Member Roles."

a course director needs to make sure that each discussion leader and each observer-reporter understands his job description.[18] After this system of job rotation has been set in motion, the full-time leader becomes responsible for *not* doing things that he has delegated to other people. But, like any other supervisor, he remains responsible to everyone who shares in the leading, and also to those whose work is directed by leaders other than himself.

Coordinating. Unless the director is alert to needs and opportunities for coordinating the activities of other members, this important organizational responsibility is likely to be neglected. For example, it rarely happens that discussion leaders and observer-reporters spontaneously follow through on the accomplishments and suggestions of their predecessors. But people are likely to make more headway by the experimental approach when they notice, analyze, and reflect on what has already been done. And the work done by case students on special committees can be most useful to the group at large when their findings are brought together and reported as a starting point for discussion by the whole group.

Appraising. An important part of any leader's job is to help set up a situation such that appraising becomes a forward-looking and practically continuous activity in which all members take part. In a case study group, constructive and objective criticism can be fostered if a teacher invites appraisal of the work method and of performance (rather than of persons) in relation to standards and aims agreed upon by the group. (An effective suggestion system, which gears in with performance appraisal, is almost certain to develop in a situation where people take turns leading and following in clearly defined functional roles.)

While carrying out his managerial functions, a course director is in a favorable position to get on with his job as a perennial student of social relations. In considering what a teacher can appropriately do, we have therefore already suggested a large part of our answer to the second question—

What Can a Teacher Try to Learn?

A teacher who works with other members of study groups has many opportunities to practice all the skills that we've just been talking about. And, as long as he can keep his mind flexible, he's in a better position to learn than are most of his students. For one thing, instead of taking part in only one series of meetings, he may be able to devote years to the job. A second advantage comes from a feeling of responsibility for what the situation becomes. This feeling is likely to be far stronger in a full-time

[18] In study groups that use our variant of case method, written descriptions of these two jobs are given to every member who plans to undertake them.

teacher than in students (even when they undertake a share of the leading). And it can help to keep a teacher on his toes as a learner.

Of course, when the subject of study is how to become as productive as possible in doing things with other people, the assignment is so large that even the keenest student couldn't hope to cover all of it, no matter how much time and effort he put into it. But any apt pupil who sticks at it can keep learning by pursuing three related lines of inquiry:

1. In what ways can members of a study group most effectively help each other in the job of *learning how to learn* about productive interaction?

2. How can a teacher (whether professional or amateur) improve his insight and his skills as a supervisor of other learners?

3. What can be done by a teacher-student (or a student-teacher) to foster the desire to learn?

In working on such questions, a teacher naturally keeps in mind certain long-term aims. For example, he tries to learn all he can about:

1. What needs to be done in order to establish and maintain a system of work relationships which provides a wide range of opportunities, satisfactions, and incentives for productive interaction

2. The most educational way to develop and use a record of actual performance on the job by all members in the work group

3. How to evoke in every member a sense of responsibility for doing his best *as a Member*; for reporting what he thinks he has learned; for learning how to do better; and for fostering self-education in other members.

The mere listing of such aims shows why no teacher can be completely satisfied with what he and others accomplish during any series of meetings. But some dissatisfaction can be a good thing. It can keep a teacher up to the mark as a student. And through him it may stimulate other students.

What Is Communicated by "Resonance"?

In any work group, communication through each member to other members takes place primarily because of what each person is, as a person. And particularly in relation to leading members, *it makes a* difference what each of them cares for so deeply that he speaks for it *not merely in what he says but also in what he does.* As appointed leader, a course director thus has a special responsibility for bringing to life in his behavior the ideas in which he professes to believe. For instance, does a teacher suggest that case method becomes most practical when it begins to be built into a person's mind, as a habitual way of responding to current events? If he hopes to bring any such suggestion out of the realm of "inert ideas," he must consistently exemplify it. And how is he

illustrating that idea if he tries to impose any opinion of his own as a final and indisputable conclusion? Another test of his integrity is his attitude toward criticism. Presumably he says that constructive criticism should always be regarded as an opportunity to learn something. How does he respond, or react, when criticisms are leveled at him? (And they will be if the situation of the study group actually becomes a workshop and not just a wordshop.) Again, does he say that the misunderstandings and disagreements of participants "in cases" can be treated as starting points from which to seek more understanding? If so, what happens when a member of the study group openly disagrees with him? How does he take it when some misunderstanding (or other block) prevents him from carrying out one of his own plans for the group? Does he feel—and communicate—annoyance? Or does he show that he sees this difficulty as an opening to work with other people at the job "all knowledge is for"? [19]

Finally, does he only *say* that it is possible and desirable to develop techniques that favor productive interaction? Or is he able to demonstrate any such techniques (even the simple one of alert and courteous listening), thereby showing that he has learned some small part of the lesson which he is recommending to them?

What it boils down to is this: In trying to help people learn for themselves what case method can do for them in their social relationships, does a teacher's behavior affirm what he says? Or is the picture (that is faintly etched by his words) blurred, distorted, or even obliterated by reason of what he is? Does a teacher care so much for his subject that nothing can dampen his enthusiasm? Does he believe that every human being has some capacity to learn and to grow? Has he enough insight to find "the growing edge" in the mind of each potential learner? Is he interested and able to stimulate the will-to-learn in a person who hasn't yet recognized that a given field of interest could yield a rich harvest for him?

These are test questions, not only for a professional teacher but also for everyone else. Is there anyone who, at some time of his life, doesn't find himself in a position to offer help and direction to someone whose understanding is pushing outward from a "growing edge"?

Case references may make that idea specific.

One such opportunity was offered in the case of *An Engineer and a Machinist*. What happened there? Apparently a young engineer didn't even see his chance to kindle scientific interest in a machinist (who wondered what was done with "his" rods in the test laboratory). The

[19] Irving R. Weschler and Jerome Reisel express this same general idea: "The fact that there were some people in the group who held strongly opposing viewpoints provided the opportunity to learn how to deal with conflict." *Inside a Sensitivity Training Group*, p. 31.

machinist came to the laboratory totally unprepared. Therefore he didn't even look for the scientific significance of a "test to destruction." All he saw was destruction. In a couple of minutes, one of his rods, perfected in hours of painstaking craftsmanship, was reduced to misshapen "junk." And since no one had given him the scientific information that he needed to look with, no one was in a position to say afterward whether or not that craftsman was capable of "understanding what science is all about."

The following reflective report by the late Charles Morgan[20] shows what can be done by a teacher who doesn't react with discouragement, annoyance, or rejection when a potential learner appears to have missed the whole point. Here is the teacher "in his true character . . . actively utilizing his small share" of insight and, by his enthusiasm, illuminating what he deeply cares for.

An Example of Creative Teaching

Always the teacher must seek the private mind, must uncover the explosive mixture and drop his spark into it. Even when he succeeds, he may seem to have failed utterly; the detonation is often silent or so long delayed that when it comes, it is beyond his hearing. Who writes to a master at his preparatory school to say: "it was you who opened Keats for me"? No one, partly because the English male is a shy animal, partly because, in those abrupt and concrete terms, it is seldom quite true.

Rarely can one say with precision which spark lighted the train or where and when it fell. One remembers the man—that he gave out heat and light; one remembers a sense of communication with him and through him; one remembers above all having been emancipated by him from the terrible anonymity of a boy lost in a crowd. With these grateful memories the discovery of Keats or of some other supreme illumination of one's personal life is, perhaps, somehow associated. But how? Where was the point of contact? When did the spark fall? Memory gives no certain answer. Besides, it was so long ago. . . . Mr. Brown has presumably forgotten the scrubby little Smith, aged 11, who wrote his first essay for him forty years ago. So Mr. Brown, nearing his allotted span now, goes unthanked, except silently, when little Smith clips an adjective or works with a chisel on a relative clause or reads again the ode that laid his heaven open. "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains my sense. As if . . . as though . . . as if—I'm sorry, sir, I didn't have time to learn it properly." And that morning Mr. Brown said: "Some day you will. Sit down. Listen. It's not 'repetition.' It's the choir of heaven." And the boy sat and listened, and his ears were opened and he heard.

[20] Charles Morgan, *Liberties of the Mind*, "Master and Pupil or the Liberty of Teaching," pp. 126–127. This account of what happened to, and in, "scrubby little Smith" has the quality of a firsthand report. Unless we are greatly mistaken, the experience that it pictures is taken from the boyhood of the late Charles Morgan.

CHAPTER 8

TREATING DIFFICULTIES AS CASE MATERIAL

> The case method takes time. And since results are not quickly apparent, much of this time may seem to be wasted. Often twelve or thirteen two-hour sessions are necessary before the benefits of the case method become apparent.[1]

In the preceding chapter we considered some of the gains that are usually made during a series of case discussions. But naturally there are difficulties, too, some of them serious enough to have prevented people from embarking on case study. However, anyone who is interested in studying productive interaction can use such difficulties as case material.

For instance, "case method takes time." (And the considerable amount of time that must be invested in order to gain appreciable benefits from case method is only one aspect of the *time factor* which has discouraged many people.) Moreover, questions about the duration and timing of case discussions become even more complex when decisions must be made about *spatial location.* (For example, in a management development program, where should meetings be held?) And some of the most serious obstacles to learning by case method appear to be rooted in *human nature.* To what extent can such difficulties *for* case method be overcome by technical changes *in* case method?

In offering answers to these questions, we'll begin with the time factor.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE TIME FACTOR[2] THAT HAVE SEEMED TROUBLESOME

Resources and limitations of time differ considerably according to (1) where case method is being used, and (2) what people are trying to

[1] Scott Nicholson, "Training Managers by the Case Method."

[2] In the following pages we concentrate on one factor at a time. But since these typi-

do with it. For example, some case students already hold responsible positions in business or industry. For others, learning is their main business, because they are enrolled as full-time students in an institution of learning.

When case method is used as part of a management development program (in a business or industrial enterprise), the time factor is critical. All the time spent on case study must be taken away from full work schedules. Therefore it is obviously desirable to keep study time to a minimum. But what is the irreducible minimum? And what other questions about timing does a training director need to consider?

Here are a few of them.

Duration

In order that our Managers may gain the benefits of case method, how much time should be allotted to each meeting? How much work must be done by group members in between meetings? What is the best time of day for case discussions? Does it make any important difference how far apart the meetings are?

A Range of Answers

People in different organizations have come up with widely different answers to such questions. But some of the answers have imposed unnecessary limitations on what could be accomplished. If a training director is interested in gathering case material [3] when planning his program, what might he learn from the experience of other people?

In some firms each discussion meeting has been limited to one hour. But that decision rules out, in advance, the most important benefits of discussion. Experienced discussion leaders agree that with a group of fifteen to twenty people it takes at least two hours to bring out a range of opinions and then work toward a meeting of minds.

On the other hand, a session of more than three hours—especially with no break in the middle—seems too long for most people. Naturally, there are marked individual differences in willingness and ability to maintain the intensity of concentration that is required for profitable discussion. But practical planning for any form of group work is based on a realistic appraisal of what the least interested and able members can do —if they try. Experience shows that a two-hour case discussion doesn't even seem long to most people *when they take an active part in it.* In many

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cal factors are related, all of them tend to edge in when any one of them is observed or analyzed.

[3] Within the limits of a single chapter, there isn't room to present a variety of cases such as a training director might look into for himself. All that can be done here is to offer some tentative conclusions, based on experience in many organizations.

firms which started with one-hour sessions, it was soon decided to double the time.

The matter of *homework* has also troubled many people. We've considered this matter at some length in earlier chapters. So we'll only touch on it here. It's one of many questions in which time and human nature operate as interactive variables. For instance, when homework is an externally imposed requirement, busy adults are likely to resent it. Many case students have either skimped it or skipped it. But when doing homework helps a person to get something he wants, then his response is likely to be different. Both the character and the timing of such work can make a difference. For instance, being required to read a long case before every meeting has seemed burdensome to many people.[4]

But a person who is *preparing to lead a case discussion* has a strong incentive to work. For example, the desire to acquit himself well has often motivated a busy supervisor to look through six or more cases before even beginning to prepare a discussion plan.

The total time needed for a series of case discussions is another moot point. Can the desired results be achieved in three or four meetings? Or isn't that time enough? Such questions can't profitably be considered apart from other aspects of scheduling, such as timing on the clock and the calendar. The spatial location of meetings needs also to be taken into account. And the human factor can't be left out of it.

Costs, as a Factor in Scheduling

In thinking about the best time of day for meetings in a management development program, some training directors have applied a variant of the "time-is-money" theory. A short and narrow view of costs might be summed up like this: "The people who are getting the training are getting the benefits. So it's only fair that they should attend meetings on their own time—for instance, in the evening."

Other planners start with the idea that a management development program is a long-term investment for the organization as a whole. They naturally take a longer and broader view of costs. And some training directors have conferred in the planning stage with the people who were expected to spend time in trying to make themselves more useful to the organization. What time of day do *they* think will be most profitable for this purpose?

[4] Apparently it's not only the length of a reading assignment that tempts people to skip it. Near the beginning of one conference, a three-page case example was given out to be read overnight. Next morning, when the leader tried to arrange for role playing, it turned out that several of the members hadn't even looked at the case. Several others who had glanced at it couldn't role-play it because they couldn't remember what they had "read" twelve hours before.

Putting that question up to them obviates the kind of difficulty that is occasioned by uninformed planning *for* people. But of course other difficulties are introduced by the fact that no single answer is likely to be equally satisfactory to everyone. Some people like evening meetings. Others prefer the morning. Whatever decision is made about scheduling, it's effectiveness can be appraised—preferably in group discussion—toward the end of the course.

How Often Should Meetings Be Held?

The frequency of meetings is another question that has received a variety of answers. In some large corporations, meetings have been spaced out at monthly intervals. This arrangement has the practical advantage that an "expert" can travel around and conduct all the meetings at a number of plants. But that procedure seems to have yielded uniformly disappointing results, perhaps because of the serious loss in continuity [5] for everyone except the expert. When more than a week goes by between meetings, many people find they have to start all over again each time. But there seems to be wide agreement among leaders in adult education that weekly meetings are just about right. In a large corporation, that tested experience could be treated as an opportunity to develop the skills of conference leadership in management representatives at every plant.

There are several advantages to a weekly schedule. For instance, meetings are near enough together so that most people can maintain a sense of continuity. But the interval between weekly meetings is long enough so that special assignments can be met. For example, if collateral reading has been suggested—in connection with some case—anyone who is interested can probably find time for that. Or if members are working as special observers, they can usually manage to analyze and write up their findings in time to distribute the report at the next meeting.[6] An even more important advantage is that there is enough time between meetings so that ideas picked up at meetings can be assimilated and tested in firsthand experience.

One of the most unproductive arrangements is to cram the whole series

[5] Continuity seems to be important when people are experimenting with a method which they might use as a means of making a new start on the process of self-education. Once people are well launched on such a new method, a schedule of monthly meetings may be all right. For instance, after finishing one series of case discussions, supervisors may be interested in experimenting with case method and developing a few cases from their firsthand experience. These experiments could be reported on, and cases to illustrate new experiences could be presented, at monthly meetings.

[6] Experience with reports that have come in late has offered convincing evidence that timing is important. When a report concerns a meeting that was held two or three weeks earlier, it has rarely received serious attention from many people in any study group that we have worked with.

of case discussions into three or four consecutive days—for example, over a long week end.[7] Probably the most serious difficulty with such a schedule is that it allows almost no time between meetings for people to think about, and to experiment with, what they pick up at meetings. Learning is a highly individual process. But one prerequisite for learning-as-changing seems to be a dormant period. We're not suggesting that all the ideas which can be picked up during a lively case discussion could be appraised and assimilated within a week. But at least this process can be started. If new cases are presented every day—or worse still, two or three times a day for several days—most of the ideas that might be gathered up are likely to get lost in the scramble.

This excessive cost of a speed-up in scheduling is occasioned by the *human factor*. The human mind can't absorb and process data at the pace of an electronic computer. Also, human nature being what it is, the place at which case discussions are held can make quite a difference in what gets done during a given amount of time.

HOW DOES SPACE COME INTO IT?

When case analysis is the job to be done, intense and sustained concentration is necessary in order to get anywhere. But not every supervisor is accustomed to concentrating for as long as two hours on an assignment that is as intellectually demanding as case analysis.

Many training directors, looking squarely at the requirement and recognizing its inherent difficulty, have seen the potential advantages of holding discussion meetings in some quiet location, away from the place where supervisors work every day. Freedom from outside interruptions is a great advantage. And there are other favoring factors, too. A quiet country atmosphere can help people to achieve a leisurely frame of mind. And that mood is important. Also, when people stay together for even a few days, they can start getting to know each other. As J. Roby Kidd has said: "We are beginning to understand the values of residential education, where men share a variety of experiences with enough isolation and leisure to explore meanings and relationships." [8]

But there are serious disadvantages to holding management development programs in any remote place. For example, with a schedule of weekly meetings, travel time would be a prohibitive cost. And the expense—in time and money—of holding continuous conferences is so high that in most organizations that possibility isn't even considered for any pro-

[7] Conference week ends are not necessarily bad. In fact, for certain purposes, they are advantageous. See p. 191.

[8] J. Roby Kidd, "Liberal Education for Business Leadership," p. 79.

gram in which the members are below the level of middle management.[9]

There are evident advantages in having members of a study group meet where they regularly work. What are some of the disadvantages? Which of them are important? And to what extent can any of them be reduced by the timing of meetings?

Interruptions Can Be a Major Difficulty

The risk of interruption is probably the most serious disadvantage, especially when members of the study group are representatives of middle or top management. For example, a long-distance telephone call may summon a member from the conference room at any time. And once he has answered such a call, it may be difficult for him to get back into the conference even physically, let alone mentally.

Interruptions can be greatly reduced when meetings are held in the evening. Does this mean that an in-plant evening schedule is the answer? Or isn't there any single answer which is equally satisfactory in all organizations, at each stage in a development program, and for everyone (regardless of his organizational position)?

Circumstances Alter Cases

Fortunately, the location of a plant may remove many space-time difficulties. And the current trend toward dispersion of industry is advantageous in that respect. For example, when an enterprise is located in a suburb or in the country, a nearby country club may offer an excellent place for discussion meetings that follow lunch or dinner. (And if all meetings for management development can be held in the same place, it obviates the difficulty of seeming to make class distinctions between supervisors at different organizational levels.)

Even when a business or industry is located in a city, an integrative solution may be found. A series of case discussions can be started during a long week end in the country. In a few days of intensive work, people can begin to get the hang of a method which is new to them. And strangers can become acquainted. Thereafter, case discussions can be held in a company conference room. At this stage, the proximity to a supervisor's regular work place may afford a test of his interest in case study. Having

[9] Even when it has been decided to hold a prolonged conference somewhere in the country, it has not always been easy to reach the right decision on the question: How far away is far enough but not too far? If the location is remote, there have often been difficulties connected with travel time for high-powered resource people who were invited to lead a few meetings. And sometimes conferees have expressed dissatisfaction because there was no opportunity for recreation in their leisure time. Yet when conferences are held near a city, competing distractions have sometimes interfered with time needed for study, exercise, and sleep.

had a chance to sample case method, will his wish to get on with it be strong enough to counteract the pull of other interests?

DURATION AND THE PROCESS OF LEARNING

Training directors have given different answers to the question: How many meetings should there be in each series of case discussions? Such differences in opinion seem to depend partly on the way people think about two related questions: What kind of learning is at stake here? And how long does it take to achieve it?

If those questions had always been explicitly asked, some unrealistic answers-in-action might have been ruled out in advance. For instance, unit-hour schedules for training programs seem to express a quantitative view of teaching-learning. One might call it—

The "Input-Output" Formula

The underlying assumptions which show through that formula seem to be as follows: The hours put in by a trainer and trainees will add up to a predictable amount of management training. The ground to be covered in a given series of meetings can be divided up into subject areas (topics). And group members can be conducted through these areas at a predetermined pace. Information and a "pattern for decision making" can be transmitted to trainees, who will apply these products of learning when they get back to their regular jobs. If management representatives need only a little training, or if the costs of providing more training seem excessive, a unit-hour program can be kept short. Perhaps four or five sessions of one hour each will suffice. But naturally, more extensive training and more thorough drilling in decision making can be provided if more time can be invested in the program.

Perhaps the main charm of a program built on such assumptions is that it looks well on paper. A unit-hour outline, complete with the main ideas to be transmitted, may convince a top executive that he knows what he's buying in such a program.

But the chief difficulty with that kind of programming is that it doesn't work. The *input-output formula can be regarded as successful only to the extent that words are accepted as the significant medium and measure of learning.* Certainly, a given amount of talk and written matter can be given out by a training director. And many of these words can be put into notebooks by people who listen and read. The notebooks can then be taken back to a supervisor's regular place of work, as proof of what he has learned from the course.

Learning-as-Changing Is Different

But training directors are responsible for stimulating a kind of learning that will show up in effective behavior. Their job is to help people in a process that is much more difficult, slow, and unpredictable than memorizing information or being drilled in predetermined behavior patterns. This kind of learning entails growth. Neither the rate nor the amount of such learning can accurately be foreseen. "If you give human beings a chance to grow you can never predict the outcome." [10]

No experienced and honest teacher would guarantee that significant signs of growth will show up within a few weeks. What he could say with certainty is that little or nothing can be achieved if all the work by case method is limited to four or five meetings. Even with ten or twelve meetings and with work done between meetings, he wouldn't expect to do much more than help a few people reach the point where they are ready to go ahead on their own. How might that much be done in a series of ten to twelve meetings?

Three to Get Started

Our experience suggests that it takes at least three meetings to get started. In the first session, a course director can offer a few explanations as to aims and techniques and can offer people an initial experience in case analysis. The focus of attention at this first meeting can be on getting the hang of case method.

The second meeting can be devoted wholly to analyzing a case. And if a relatively simple case is used, there's a fair chance of working through a complete analytical cycle, such as the Incident Process. In that way, a study group can establish a standard for its own performance.

At the third meeting, another case can be analyzed. But in working on this case, group members can be invited to try and improve on their previous performance in some specific respect. Usually they can make some progress. And for this reason, the third meeting is likely to prove more rewarding than either of the first two.

Getting Ready to Cross the Great Divide

Toward the close of the third meeting, a director can ask a question which has often led to an important step forward: "How do you like working by case method?" Usually the ensuing dialogue starts something like this: "Oh, we like it all right! But. . . ."

"But what?"

[10] Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

"Well . . . these cases are all very interesting. But *why don't we talk about our own experience?* Now *I* could give you a case. . . ."

That spontaneous suggestion is welcome to any director who feels responsible for helping people to start using case method in their firsthand experience. And if there's time in a series, after that offer has been made, for someone to prepare and present a case derived from his own experience, the whole group may get a clearer view of what case method is and in what ways it might be useful to them. But *timing* is all-important. Some training directors have learned the hard way that to start off with "a case from the works" can wreck their whole program. Unless conferees have begun to develop ways of thinking and talking that befit serious case students, criticisms of other organizational members may be so sharp as to arouse resentment.[11] But not to discuss one of their own cases before the end of the course is to miss a potentially fruitful opportunity.

Learning by Seeing Connections and by Taking the Lead

Other practices, which also take time, have helped people to make connections between remote cases and their own experience. One such practice is holding special meetings to take stock of achievements, to take note of difficulties, and to make specific plans for working on some current difficulty. In our opinion, it's worth while to hold two such meetings, one at about mid-series and one at the end. But in a series of ten meetings, that leaves only five sessions—allowing for the three orientation meetings—at which members could take turns preparing and presenting cases and observing and reporting on case discussions.

When twelve meetings are held with a group of twenty people, only fourteen members can serve in either of the two leading roles, if one team starts at the fourth meeting. But in most organizations, it has not yet seemed practical to continue any one series longer than twelve meetings.

That Needn't Be the End

However, the end of a formal course need not mark the end of case method as a means to promote management development. Experience suggests that one of the best ways to realize the benefits of case method is by informal conferring on the job.[12] That's one reason why it's advisable to start a management development program at the top organizational level and then to work down through the management hierarchy. Otherwise, what a first-line supervisor learns in a formal training program may have

[11] Perhaps the people whose actions are portrayed in the case aren't members of the study group. But that kind of news travels fast along the grapevine. For this reason it's advisable to get advance permission to use the case.

[12] In fact, if that doesn't happen—regardless of the number of formal meetings in a series—the program itself must be rated as relatively unproductive.

to be unlearned when he finds that his immediate superior either isn't familiar with ideas discussed in the course or doesn't believe in them.

In considering what and how people can learn by case method, we have touched on technical factors and human nature. But before going further into difficulties and opportunities introduced by those variables, let's take a look at time-and-space in academic situations.

TIME-SPACE VARIABLES—IN AN ACADEMIC SETTING

Questions about timing and location for case discussions are naturally easier to answer in an institution of learning than in an industrial organization. For one thing, many decisions are largely predetermined by academic calendars and customs. But a more important advantage is that study is (presumably) a full-time job for most of the people who are enrolled in courses. Therefore, instead of trying to compress the whole series of meetings into the shortest possible time, each course is expected to last for at least a semester. And homework is part of the accepted pattern.

Also, there is rarely any difficulty in deciding where to meet.

But even in a university, the opportunity to learn by case method is limited by time-space relationships. For example, the academic hour is traditionally only fifty minutes long (partly in order to allow time for teachers and students to get from one classroom to another). But that's not long enough for adequate case discussion. Also, undergraduate courses are likely to be on a schedule of three meetings a week. The three-hour credit system could, theoretically, be met by scheduling three consecutive hours on one day each week. But conflicts with other courses usually make that arrangement impossible, especially when so many undergraduates are enrolled in a given course that hundreds of schedules must be considered.

Such scheduling difficulties for undergraduates may not be all to the bad. One consequence may be that undergraduates aren't expected to go in seriously for case study. But perhaps they can get more out of it as graduates.[13]

[13] We're not suggesting that case method is necessarily ruled out—even in large classes where lecturing must be used. The disadvantages of the lecture system can be greatly mitigated by making some use of case method. For example, ideas presented in lectures can be made more vivid and concrete by frequent *case references*. In question periods, students can be invited to cite *firsthand experiences*. A few class hours can be devoted to *case analysis*—especially if a large class can be subdivided so that no section contains more than twenty to thirty students. And *short case reports* can be given, even to a large class, for analysis in written examinations. In such ways, undergraduates may experience something of *case method*. And those who like it may decide to devote more time and effort to it later on.

Scheduling Graduate Seminars

Planning for case study in graduate seminars can usually be more flexible. Even when the three-hour credit system still applies, it need not be wholly disadvantageous. In fact, it sometimes serves to demonstrate the seriousness of a student's interest. For example, M.I.T. students who have wanted to enroll in seminars conducted by the Incident Process have volunteered to put in an extra hour every week (without getting academic credit for it) in order that each of two meetings a week could be two hours long.[14] And one possibility of avoiding conflicts with other courses is to schedule a seminar over the lunch hour, for example, from eleven to one. That arrangement affords a further opportunity to test the degree of a student's interest. Anyone who enrolls in a course without regard to some loss of credit, and even of lunch, demonstrates an important qualification as a learner.

Maturity and Experience in Social Relationships

But even graduate students may be hampered, in gaining the benefits of case method, by certain aspects of time-in-human-experience that are characteristic of their youth. How many young people are sufficiently mature emotionally and sufficiently experienced in social relationships to make full use of such an opportunity for self-education?

It has often seemed to us that a seasoned administrator is in a more favorable position to learn by case method than any young person can be. Perhaps this is partly because experience has taught the administrator how much he doesn't know. But sometimes the key variable seems to be that a mature person is more ready to learn from other people, and less likely to resent criticism, than someone who has not yet achieved inner security. A third advantage, for any experienced Manager, is that he has already dealt with a wide range of actual difficulties. In this way, he has had more opportunity to develop the practical judgment which tells him what decisions might be workable in any given case.[15]

[14] Sometimes conflicts with other courses have made it impossible for some students to arrange their schedule in this way. And one year we made the mistake of permitting a few students to sign up for three hours a week (because of a conflict for the fourth hour), while others were putting in four hours. One difficulty occasioned by that arrangement was that the part-time students were not accepted by the others as full-fledged members of the seminar group.

[15] Many teachers shared the experience, directly after the Second World War, of having as students a number of young veterans who were far more mature than college students in the U.S.A. usually are. Those were the halcyon days for learning by case method in universities. Young people who had held responsible positions in the armed services had already learned enough about getting results with other people to be in a state of readiness to learn more.

HUMAN NATURE AND CASE METHOD

By noting differences of maturity and experience in case students, we have touched on our second pair of variables: *human nature* and *case method*. That's a large subject. So it's just as well that we've been talking about it, off and on, throughout the preceding chapters.

In this chapter we center on difficulties and ways of trying to overcome them. But first, what makes a given response look like a difficulty?

Aims Determine Judgments, Diagnosis, and Treatment

To classify anything as a difficulty is to make a judgment. And any such judgment naturally depends on one's aims. For example, if case method is regarded merely as a means for developing certain intellectual and verbal skills—such as speaking in public, or making a summary—then combativeness and extreme sensitivity to criticism might not be judged as troublesome. But if a person is concerned with case method as a means to promote productive interaction, then anything that tends to hamper people when they work side by side naturally looks like a difficulty.

In diagnosing and treating difficulties, a person is also guided by his aims. At the start of this book we mentioned one of our aims—working toward a kind of understanding which blends rational thinking with social imagination, and also with practical judgment (common sense). A person with this aim is likely to vary his diagnosis and treatment of difficulties according to whether they seem symptomatic of a deficiency in practical judgment. For example—

Some Intellectual Difficulties and Ways of Trying to Overcome Them

In using the Incident Process, people have often had difficulties at the two stages where they are invited to think about issues.[16]

A Visual Aid

For years we found no satisfactory way of working with two kinds of difficulties that seem to block many case students when the question is raised: "In this case, what needs to be decided, now?" Many people have nothing to say on that question. But almost always others show, by what they say, that their view is exceedingly limited. They define the issue as an either-or question for action, one that invites an immediate answer of "yes" or "no." And they indicate that they are focusing almost entirely on some single individual, event, or item of behavior as though that

[16] In stage 3, the issues in question are for short-term action, or for arbitration. In stage 5, we invite consideration of issues for long-term action.

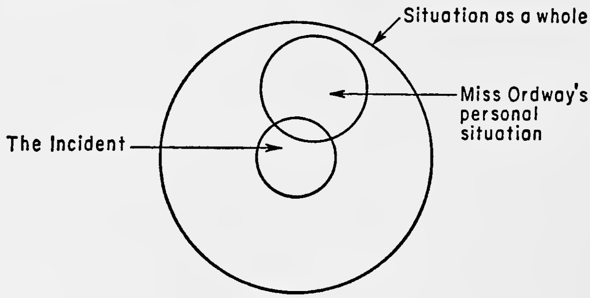
one part of the situation were all that needs to be thought about. For instance, in the case of *A Last-minute Request for Time Off*,[17] the first suggestion as to the immediate issue for decision has usually been: "Should Miss Ordway get the week end off?"

Naturally, a discussion leader dislikes to reject any suggestion that comes from a group member. Such behavior on his part may arouse resentment or encourage passivity. And the situation is little better if a leader accepts a suggestion (by making some pleasant remark) but then proposes quite a different formulation of his own. On the other hand, suppose he thinks that if the suggestion is adopted it will greatly limit what the study group can see in the case. Is he meeting his responsibility as a leader if he plays a purely permissive role?

In our view, the job of a discussion leader at this stage is to help the group start visualizing what is at stake in the case which they are analyzing. For this purpose, a diagram has proved useful. It can be begun by a discussion leader and completed by suggestions from the group at large.

Even a person-centered, "action-pointed" issue formulation can be accepted as part of what needs to be considered. But perhaps it can be slightly reworded. For example, it may be acceptable to the group if the question of whether or not Miss Ordway should get the week end off is noted as *part of Miss Ordway's personal situation*. That issue can be indicated as follows, on a diagram which also highlights other aspects of the case.

Start of Diagram to Show Interlinking Issues



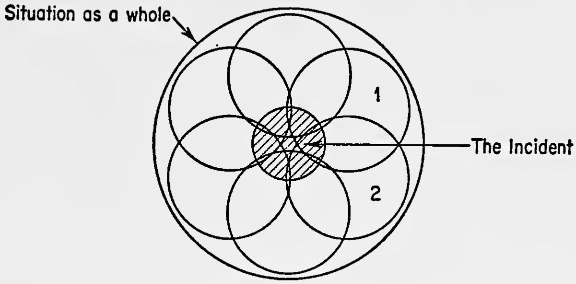
On such a diagram, the wide-open spaces practically speak for themselves. Usually a leader needs only to serve as a translator by asking some such questions as these: "Is Miss Ordway's personal situation *all* that we need to think about? What other important features *in the situation as a*

[17] That case was sketched in the Recap of Part Two.

whole will be affected by the decision about Miss Ordway's request?"

In the relatively short time that we have been using and recommending the diagram of interlinking issues, it has always proved acceptable and useful. Even in a group whose members are quite inexperienced as case analysts, a number of ideas have promptly been volunteered about interrelated issues. For example, in connection with the case involving Miss Ordway, the diagram has helped case students to visualize the importance of such factors as: continuous care of patients; rights, duties, and privileges of other employees; a personnel policy; rules about requests for time off; recent practice; requirements for efficient scheduling of ward assignments; and procedures of supervisory control. These suggestions usually come out so rapidly that within three or four minutes the diagram looks like this:

A Completed Diagram of Interlinking Issues *



* When issue formulation is implemented by "brainstorming," a great many subissues are likely to be suggested. But in order to keep the question for short-term decisions reasonably simple, we recommend that *not more* than seven or eight interlinking issues be factored out.

When such interlinking issues have been diagramed and listed, members of a study group have helped each other to advance from a short and narrow view (such as that expressed in the first suggestion of the issue) to a much more comprehensive and realistic view of what is immediately at stake in the case situation as a whole.

If anyone should comment on the amount of empty space that still shows up, a leader can suggest that this be regarded as indicative of further possibilities for thinking about what is at stake in the case. After making short-term decisions, the question of issues can be taken up again—at a higher level of abstraction. In the culminating stage of analysis, another diagram can be useful.

Difficulties Associated with Generalizing

The kind of analysis which can be most rewarding, because it can be the most practical for the future of those who go in for it, often proves to be a second sticking place—in the Incident Process. The following circumstances have frequently been troublesome. First, there is usually little time left—within a two-hour discussion period—after members of a study group have written, crystallized, presented, and tested decisions on the immediate issue (the critical question posed by the Incident). Second, many people have difficulty in extending their interest, and their scope of view, far beyond the precipitating Incident. And, third, people who attempt to generalize about a case often find it difficult to keep their feet on the ground.

What Can Be Done about It?

In working with these difficulties, the following practices have proved useful:

1. Postponing the phase of generalized discussion until after making short-term decisions.

2. Using a diagram to preview topics which have implications for long-range action.

3. Starting this stage of discussion by considering: What more needs to be done, in this case?

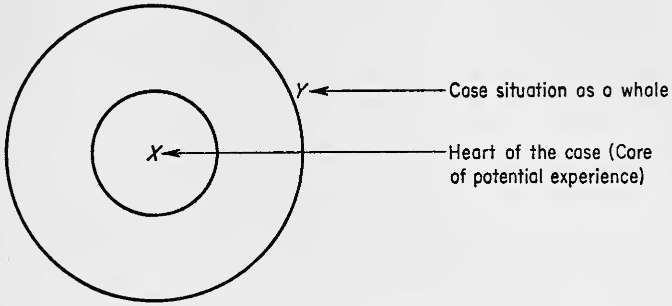
4. Making plans for remedial and preventive action in the role of someone who would be in a position to initiate or to recommend major changes in the situation. (For example, if group members have been working on the case in the collective role of arbitrator, they may now be invited to switch to the role of an administrator, an executive, or a personnel director.) Finally,

5. Turning to questions that come under the general heading: What can we learn from this case, and from each other? In this category, questions on language as social interaction and on comparative case analysis can usefully be included.

If you have had experience in leading case discussion by the Incident Process, you may well ask: Is such a program practical? Our answer to that question would be: It's not a cure-all. But it has demonstrably practical advantages. Among these, the diagram of major issues may be rated first, not only because it can be used as a starter, but also because it effectively shows what may be done in the culminating stage of case analysis, and because it displays a range of topics from which to choose.

Using the Diagram of Major Issues

The diagram can be started like this:



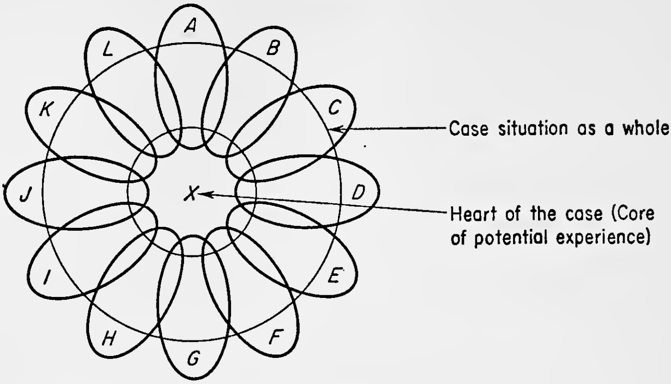
From the outset, this diagram indicates that the center of interest has now shifted *away from the precipitating Incident* (which occurred in the past) and *toward the future;* first, toward possibilities for further action in the "remote" case; then, by way of issues that need to be thought about in any such situation, into discussion of ideas that might be useful to members of a study group in their own future.

But setting up the framework for a diagram of major issues may not be all that a leader needs to do. If other members of the group are new to the Incident Process, they may not know what the term "major issue" denotes, in this context. Fortunately, that difficulty can easily be overcome. One way to get beyond it is to go back to the diagram of interlinking issues, which was worked out as a way to visualize what is at stake in the case at the stage of considering the immediate issue. In stage five, a key question to ask is: How many of the issues displayed on that diagram warrant further consideration, because of their implications for long-term action?

In almost every case, at least one or two leads can be picked up from that diagram. (If such an expectation is not realized, then the diagram of interlinking issues must have represented an overly short and narrow view). For example, in the list of topics suggested for the diagram of interlinking issues, in the case of *A Last-minute Request for Time Off,* is there any item which does *not* have some claim for consideration as a major issue?

If group members do not readily see the common denominator between these two kinds of issue, a leader may select a likely topic and diagram it. For example, organization policy or supervisory control can be displayed on the diagram of major issues, which is drawn so that it touches the "Heart of the Case," but also extends beyond the boundaries of the case situation. After a few minutes, a completed diagram will look something like this:

A Completed Diagram of Major Issues *



Key to diagram:

A --------

B --------

C -------- etc.

* Naturally, as in the diagram of interlinking issues, the number of issues is not constant. In this diagram, we use letters instead of numbers to underline the difference in ideas being pictured.

Having identified a range of topics as major issues raised by the case, a study group is in a favorable position to select the one or two topics which can be discussed in whatever time remains. Also, if each observer-for-the-day includes this diagram in his report, group members will have an opportunity to note which major issues were raised in connection with several different cases.

Sometimes a case suggests more major issues than can conveniently be displayed on one diagram. If so, two diagrams can be made. The first can show possibilities for action "soon." The second can indicate leads for action toward long-term goals.

Will These Suggestions do the Trick?

It would be pleasant to report that this method of leading into a consideration of major issues can be guaranteed to result in a high-caliber, broad-gauged discussion that enables people to get the meat out of any case. However, we're not in a position to make such a statement. For one thing, recent revisions in our practice are so new that (at the time of this writing) no one except the senior author has yet tried them out. And the success of any such experiment, whoever tries it, is likely to be limited by various shortages such as the following: a severe shortage of time (since this stage of discussion isn't usually begun till toward the end

of a two-hour discussion period), limited interest by some participants, and lack of familiarity with this kind of thinking. Is the following generalization valid—at least in the United States? Most people who go in for case study are more interested in making short-term decisions than in considering questions that relate to "what all knowledge is for"—socially speaking.

Our experience suggests that major barriers to reflective case analysis are set up by habits and assumptions which people bring with them when they join a study group. For example—

Some Unrealistic Assumptions

Wishful Thinking about Learning

Apparently many people come into a study group with the impression that during a series of case discussions learning will happen *to* them. Judging by their behavior, it seems that they cherish the illusion that mere exposure to case method will give them greater ability to make "right decisions" in future.[18] A natural corollary to that premise is: the greater the number of cases discussed, the greater the quantity of learning which can be acquired.[19]

How might a course director help people to get beyond such wishful thinking? A step in the right direction is taken whenever people find that analyzing cases can be such a good game that they want to go in for it more intensively than they had expected to. But if a course director is willing to let it go at that, he is showing himself to be more of a salesman than a teacher. Playing a game doesn't necessarily lead to developing a high degree of skill. For that purpose, the players must become seriously enlisted in playing as well as they can. Otherwise, the fun of the thing may be part of the trouble. That general idea is implied in the following comment by a training director: "As a group, they flatly rejected the [idea of] observer-reporter; they volunteered, but not too readily, as group leaders but enjoyed, as they put it, 'the mental gymnastic' of discussing the cases. Because this is our one and only top management group, and it is a costly procedure bringing them together, I would like to see them get more out of it."

When confronted with that attitude, what can a training director do? He might try to interest his colleagues in applying, or developing, a method of case analysis that is realistic—one that parallels what they need

[18] If many people didn't cling to that vain hope, there might be more resistance to the unit-hour programs conducted by some training directors. Or is passive acceptance of such instruction merely a symptom of the disease that reduces a person to the level of an organization man?

[19] Might that notion have accounted for the dissatisfaction expressed by one member of a seminar group when additional time allotted to generalized discussion cut in half the number of cases which could be talked about?

to do in making decisions and getting results in the course of their regular work.

Do Teachers Entertain Unrealistic Ideas?

Analysis of our own experience suggests that a course director's view of reality—for teaching and learning—may also be limited by notions that aren't supported by facts. For instance, does he feel *wholly* responsible for the amount of learning that gets done under his supervision? And does he assume that when progress is made by the group, every member in the group has mastered the skills employed in making that progress? (Such wishful thinking is especially easy to indulge in when there is no record to show *who remained silent* during the most difficult stages of case analysis.)

But when it comes to group work, a course director is rarely alone in entertaining untenable assumptions. Other notions at variance with existing circumstances may include—

"Stereotypes" about Group Work

Sometimes people come into a study group with preconceived notions that are as undiscriminating and as far apart as the following:

1. Many minds are better than one. The majority is usually right. Therefore, when an individual differs from the group, he should bow to group opinion.

2. Group work fetters individual freedom and prevents individual development. The group cannot be "a creative vehicle." [20] When cases are analyzed during group discussion, outstanding students can't get all the credit that is due to them. It's only the "dumb" and "lazy" students who profit when discussion makes it possible to get leads from other people.

As long as a case student holds either of the foregoing extreme opinions, he limits what can be accomplished in his study group. One way to get beyond that kind of limitation is to introduce experiments designed to yield current case material so that stereotypes may be tested in firsthand

[20] William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man*. Our students have often taken a more extreme position than Mr. Whyte himself, who notes "that the health of organization life depends upon skillful group work; it is true that the group is tremendously effective in bringing out different points of view that would otherwise remain latent, that together, members of a group see more possible lines of action than if they were consulted individually; it is true that genius cannot function in a vacuum and that interaction with others in the field can be vastly stimulating, and indeed, often indispensable." Why, then, does Mr. Whyte say: "in a college classroom . . . the student's most important relationship is not with other members of the group but to the content of the course and to the teacher as intermediary." (p. 56) How well does that statement fit the facts in any course where group discussion is the principal means of communication?

experience. By observing the results of such experiments, students may arrive at their own answers to questions like these: When the group task is case analysis, can any of the requirements be met better—or equally well and faster—by cooperative effort than by *individuals* thinking alone? Which, if any, of these requirements can be met *only* when each member thinks for himself?

Osborn's technique of "brainstorming" [21] can provide material on the first of those questions. Brainstorming is designed primarily to remove the inhibiting effects of self-doubt and of premature group criticism. All members of a group are invited to toss out at top speed the greatest possible number and variety of ideas on a given subject. Evaluation is ruled out—until later. In fact, each member is urged to contribute ideas that he would ordinarily refrain from mentioning, because even he would dismiss them as crazy. (An example of one such idea for a company product was a mouse-proof toaster.)

Brainstorming is most likely to be useful in a case study group when introduced early in a series of meetings. At that stage, people are likely to have more difficulty with techniques of case analysis than they do later. And while they are still a "statistical aggregate," inhibitions are more likely to keep them from talking than after there has been time for them to become a genuine group.

A teacher has reason for satisfaction if the experiment of brainstorming is introduced by a student. When a two-man team tries it, the observer-reporter will naturally comment on it. And perhaps his remarks will stimulate the group at large to think about why any such technique is ever needed, anywhere.

Students of Social Relations Can Have Difficulties in Social Relations

In considering some intellectual assumptions that hamper productive interaction between case students, we have crossed the artificial boundary between intellectual and social behavior. Stereotypes and unrealistic assumptions might never get firmly entrenched in a person's mind unless they helped him to rationalize what he wants to do. For instance, might not a person with egocentric or dominating habits enjoy belittling the value of group work? And might not a person who has become somewhat shy or inhibited find it congenial to think that the group knows best?

Whatever the causes, discussion leaders often have occasion to notice that the behavior of people in study groups covers a wide range. Sometimes the situation has been sized up like this: "The trouble is, a few members want to talk all the time, and some of the others won't say

[21] Alex F. Osborn, *Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Thinking.*

anything." If the state of affairs is anything like that, what might be done to help people identify the consequences of their behavior?

Four Social Experiments

Brainstorming can be used and appraised not only as a means to tap intelligence but also as an experiment in social relations. Two frequent consequences have been these: People find that they can speak out in a group, and that they have something to contribute. Other people find that formerly silent members are worth listening to.

Professor Irving Lee's ideas for "coercing agreement"[22] also have tested value. His system sets up ground rules which draw attention to what listening can do, both for the person who gets a hearing and for those who hear him out. Under the conditions of that experiment, a person who is expressing an idea, or offering a solution, may not be interrupted until he has finished what he wants to say. During that time, contradictions and criticisms are ruled out. And the only questions which are permissible are those by which a listener tests his understanding, or asks the speaker for an explanation.

Maloney's "projective listening"[23] is another technique that can profitably be applied in a case study group. That device consists in having someone restate an opinion *with which he does not agree*, trying to express it in a way that is acceptable to the person whose opinion it is. When the Incident Process is being used, "projective listening" can be practiced during and after the abbreviated debate. Among the "facts" that may be sought in this way are these: Have people been paying sufficiently close attention to speakers with whom they don't agree, so that they can accurately quote the spokesman for another opinion group? What difference will it make if this experiment is tried without advance warning? If the experiment is made several times, will anyone in the study group consider changing any of his listening habits? How many students will recognize that a discussion leader, an observer-reporter, or a chairman of any committee needs to meet the test of projective listening in regard to all the opinions expressed by everyone in the group?

Possibilities for Continuing Experimentation

A common purpose in all such experiments is to help people see how much difference it makes whether they work *with* each other, *against* each other, or merely *in disregard of* each other (every man for himself).

Under the conditions that usually develop as people continue to discuss cases, interaction tends to become increasingly productive. What Professor Lee identified as "dismissal reactions"[24] tend to decrease. And "ac-

[22] Irving J. Lee, *"Procedure for 'Coercing' Agreement."*
[23] Martin Maloney, "Semantics: The Foundation of All Business Communications."
[24] Irving J. Lee, *How to Talk with People.*

ceptance responses" become more numerous. For instance, people who start with a tendency to interrupt or to contradict often learn to control those reactions as they become increasingly interested in listening to other group members whose opinions they have come to respect. And sometimes a student deliberately tries to curb overly aggressive tendencies, perhaps because an observer has drawn attention to undesirable consequences that follow such behavior, or because he himself has noticed what happens.[25]

Once members of a study group become interested in the causes and consequences of dismissal reactions, they can gather case material by trying an experiment suggested (and used) by Professor Lee. What differences in the character of talk will show up if a comparative study is made at the beginning of a course, at the midpoint, and again at the end?

Perhaps the worst difficulty with that kind of experiment is that often no one except the teacher seems interested in trying it. Sometimes a stronger stimulus to the experimental attitude may be given by asking members of a study group to consult their current experience in looking for answers to questions like these: In what ways does the size of a work group (for example, this group) seem to affect the relationships between people in the group? For instance, what are some observable differences in the way people work together, and feel about each other, according to whether they are interacting (1) *in the whole study group*—perhaps numbering twenty people or more; (2) *in a subgroup of six or eight persons*—on a special committee, or in an opinion group such as is formed in stage 4 of the Incident Process; or (3) *in a partnership*—such as that between a discussion leader and an observer-reporter? Besides the number of people involved, what else seems to be accountable for differences in attitude and in performance? For example, what about the time factor, especially as to duration and continuity? What about spatial conditions; for instance, proximity in seating arrangements at the conference table, or in community living outside the study group? And what can be observed about the effect of personality as a factor that makes a difference in the kind of interaction which takes place between partners, committee members, and in the group at large?

It's Not the Number

These are only a few of the experiments and questions that might be productive in any study group. But the number of experiments tried isn't the key variable. What matters is the degree of interest and involvement

[25] Evidence of such an effort to change a habit was given in the following written comment made by a student in Professor Weschler's sensitivity training group: "... I have decided to try an experiment during the next two meetings. I am going to try not to 'toe-step.' It will be tough, but I'll try." (Excerpt from Max's diary, given on p. 56 of the report by Irving R. Weschler and Jerome Reisel, *Inside a Sensitivity Training Group*.)

felt by the students. Some teachers have noticed that even one experiment planned and initiated by a student can have more effect on the group than all the experiments that are introduced by a teacher.

A major issue in teaching therefore becomes: How can we help the students to start experimenting on their own initiative? This formulation of the issue may suggest that in the U.S.A. anything that can be recommended as practical is likely to have some appeal. And when students become convinced that something is practical—for them—they are naturally interested in finding out what they can do with it.

Ways to Test and Develop Common Sense

Words like "practical judgment" and "common sense" have different connotations for everyone. But two capacities that are generally accepted as practical are: (1) *being able to foresee* what is likely to happen (in the immediate future) in consequence of alternative decisions, and (2) *being able to make decisions that prove workable*. In a case study group, how can such capacities be tested? And how might they be developed?

In thinking about a remote case, there isn't much chance for a person *to develop* his common sense. But he can test his judgment—for example, by trying to make a workable decision for action to meet some difficulty in that case. And when people continue to work together, even on remote cases, the way they think and talk can be such as to help each member develop his latent capacity for making practical judgments.

We'll take up tests and developmental possibilities separately, starting with some tests of judgment.

Deciding How to Handle Incidents

In the Incident Process, this test mounts toward its climax when each member commits himself in writing as to what he considers the most effective way to cope with the immediate difficulty posed by the Incident in each case. Can a person make, and express, a clear-cut decision? And how practical will that decision look to other people?

The Test of Group Opinion

That second question can adequately be answered only when a *bare decision* has been developed into a *reasoned opinion*. For many people, that job is easier to do when there is a chance to do it orally, in a group, instead of doing it in writing, alone. Often it is possible to recognize the relevance and weight of a point that one previously dismissed as trifling when someone else presents it, perhaps in a slightly different form.[26]

[26] The way in which people naturally work together, in weighing and crystallizing reasons, has much in common with Norman Maier's "group decision procedure." And, if case students become acquainted with Professor Maier's ideas through reading, there's

Role Playing

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Another way to test the workability of a decision is to role-play it. For example, in the case of *A Last-minute Request for Time Off*, the following decision has many times been offered as a solution: "The Assistant Director should talk to Miss Ordway, and get her to change her point of view."

How practical will that decision look, if one student plays the part of the assistant director and interviews another student, who takes the role of Miss Ordway? [27]

If there is time for the role players to spend a few minutes preparing the script, they can get a more intensive exercise in imagining how such an interview might actually develop. In some cases, it has seemed worth while to role-play more than one decision. Whenever a theoretical decision is dramatized by role playing, both actors and audience can get the benefit of reexamining it in concrete behavior.

Applying the "Risk Technique"

Another experiment by which to test foresight is Norman Maier's "risk technique." [28] When a study group is using the Incident Process, a natural time to consider foreseeable risks is immediately after alternative decisions for short-term action have been role-played, or presented by spokesmen. The group as a whole can now work together, trying to predict potential disadvantages of the various decisions that have proposed. For example, in the case involving Miss Ordway, what undesirable consequences might follow the decision *to grant her request unconditionally* or, alternatively, *to refuse it unconditionally?*

After listing some likely consequences, the group can weigh them. What degree of probability should be assigned to each potential disadvantage? And how serious might the consequences be, if each risk—envisaged as a possibility—became an actuality?

The Test of History

When the case under discussion is taken from the past, a consideration of *hypothetical risks* can be supplemented by a historical footnote. The

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always a chance that someone will recognize and comment on their applicability to the work of a study group.

[27] Of course, such a solution might look more practical than it is—if the student who plays the part of Miss Ordway doesn't interpret the role realistically. But it shouldn't be difficult for a course director to offer the part to someone who could be counted on to appreciate, and express, Miss Ordway's state of mind at the time when she made her last-minute "request" for the holiday week end.

[28] Norman R. F. Maier, *Principles of Human Relations: Applications to Management*, pp. 62–86.

study group can be told what actually was decided (as the best way to handle the Incident) and what happened afterward. Sometimes this part of the test proves to be an eye opener. Perhaps some risk that looked extremely serious and probable, in theory, didn't materialize, or didn't amount to much. Conversely, other undesirable consequences, not envisaged by anyone in the study group, may have been aggravated or precipitated by the decision that was taken in the case (and that may have been advocated by some case students).

Naturally, the pragmatic test isn't absolute. History is full of accidents. So the practical worth of a decision isn't proved merely because it was followed (in one case or in many) by desirable consequences. Nevertheless, this kind of test is one which all of us must meet. And a knowledge of history is useful, because what actually did happen cannot be dismissed as something that couldn't happen.

Similarly, none of the other tests mentioned (for gauging practical judgment) is scientifically accurate. But taken together they can provide a rough measure. When taken seriously, and consistently applied as a means of learning from experience, these same techniques can help a person to develop his common sense.

Using Case Method to *Develop* Practical Judgment

All the above-mentioned techniques can be made into everyday habits. For instance:

1. Making a clear-cut, independent decision and thinking it out as a reasoned opinion gives a person something definite to learn from—in the light of what happens afterward.

2. The practice of working for a group opinion can be highly practical. As suggested by one reporter in a study group: "Can't all of us count on making better decisions in our everyday work, even if we don't get any smarter, because we have learned that it pays to 'tap the wisdom of the group' in pretesting a decision?" Supervisors who have developed that habit have testified that it is a practical way to supplement their own judgment.[29]

3. Something similar to role-playing a decision, in order to pretest its workability, can be done mentally. For example, a person can envisage an interview, trying to foresee how someone else might respond. Having done so, the difference between the imagined interview and the actual conversation may be instructive in retrospect.

4. The risk technique can usefully be applied in any situation if there

[29] This practice results not only in better decisions but also in *more acceptable decisions*. That consequence has been brilliantly and repeatedly demonstrated in companies which have adopted the Scanlon Plan. See Chap. 10, and Frederick G. Lesieur (ed.), *The Scanlon Plan*.

is time for it. Many supervisors have reported that they found it practical. And it can be specially valuable if used in the process of reaching a group decision. It often happens that while foreseeable risks are being discussed, a person changes his mind. Perhaps some point that he dismissed as unimportant, when thinking by himself, becomes real to him as he listens to others discuss it. Sometimes, after briefly discussing risks, someone has spontaneously rejected, as improbable or unimportant, a possibility that he previously urged as a weighty reason against a given decision. Such a change of mind suggests that some of us have more common sense than we draw on at first, and in thinking alone. If so, may that be one reason why "consultative management" can be so useful?

5. The test of history can be educational to everyone who reflects on it, especially if he seriously tried to foresee what would happen and is willing and able to compare his forecast with actual consequences.

6. Another way in which a person can develop his practical insight—and outsight—is by schooling himself in *semantic disciplines*. For example, anyone can improve his capacity to connect with other people if he learns how to listen not only to what they say, but also for what they seem to mean, and for what they don't say. Also, by listening to his own words, he may get a clue to assumptions and attitudes within himself of which he has previously been unaware. And by constantly trying to appreciate what the language of his words and his action seems to mean to other people, he may be able *to gain skill in the practical task of communicating with others, instead of merely talking at them* or *past them.*

WHAT DOES IT COME DOWN TO?

Throughout this chapter we have been considering difficulties that commonly come up in study groups and ways of using them as case material from which to learn. Isn't it that attitude, even more than any specialized techniques, which makes case method practical?

Someone once said to us: "It seems to me you almost recommend making mistakes." We certainly don't mean to do that. What we do mean is this: To be human involves having difficulties and making mistakes. That being so, why not use case method as a means (1) to observe, analyze, and reflect on what seems to be accountable for difficulties that often arise, (2) to develop working hypotheses for preventing them, and (3) to devise experiments designed to overcome difficulties and to learn from mistakes? When so adapted, case method can become an integral part of the process of learning, and growing, by experience.

Since a recapitulation of these last two chapters comes next, there's no need to summarize this chapter now. Instead, here's a scrap from a case. It may serve to highlight the central idea of this chapter. It also points

toward the next chapter, in which we consider the question: What is experience? And how does a person achieve it?

A FINAL CASE ILLUSTRATION

In a corporation with international activities, a recently promoted Chinese manager (stationed in southeast Asia) made a costly error—through failure to check local regulations. His chief in Boston pointed this out to him but decided to give the man another chance, convinced that he now understood his mistake and had learned from it. In replying to his chief's letter to that effect, the manager included the following quotation (from the fifteenth-century Chinese philosopher, Wang Yang Ming):

"The sages do not consider that making no mistakes is a blessing. They believe, rather, that the great virtue of man lies in his ability to correct his mistakes and continually to make a new man of himself."

RECAP OF PART THREE

In Chapter 6, we (1) gave reasons for developing the Incident Process, (2) outlined it, (3) illustrated it—by reproducing portions of an observer's report, and (4) mentioned some job opportunities for case students who take turns as discussion leaders and as observer-reporters.

Our five-step cycle (for working *on* a case) and our system of job rotation (for working *in* an unfolding situation) represent our tentative answer to the question: How might traditional techniques of case method be modified, so that—

1. *Anyone may find it enjoyable and instructive to study cases.*
2. *Any student of social relations has favorable opportunities to see, and to treat, the situation of the study group as a test case.*

In Chapter 7, we considered some of the skills which come into play when members of a case study group continue to work together with the aim of learning all they can about productive interaction. The case for this way of working by case method hinges on this question: Are most people as proficient as they need to be—and could be—in the various skills that our case students practice? By checking the following list, you can rapidly see whether *you need* to do all these things and *can* do them as skillfully as you'd like to.

1. Reading for meaning, to pick up clues for further investigation, in documents that are important to you
2. Seeing the significance of incidents that many people dismiss as insignificant, and doing so while there's still time to take preventive action
3. Knowing what kinds of information you need, and where to look, in order to piece together the whole story (especially when you're responsible for making decisions in a situation where testimony is contradictory)
4. Being able to organize a welter of information—eliminating peripheral details and pointing up key facts, yet not ending up with a seriously incomplete or sharply slanted statement
5. Taking an organizational view of every situation where relationships are formalized, but not limiting yourself to that view when you give advice (or orders or reprimands) to other people
6. Finding the will, and some effective way, to haul off from situations in which you are emotionally involved, trying to take account of all that is at stake—not only for you and your immediate associates but also impersonally, and as principles

7. Defining clear-cut issues for short-term action, but not forgetting that possibilities for action later are inevitably affected by action now

8. Making decisions that are realistic and rational, and talking reasonably with other people about your decisions and theirs

9. Listening to others who share with you the responsibility for making a group decision; trying to assess opinions that are different from yours; paying respect to the judgment of others, and "doubting a little of your own infallibility" [1]

10. Learning to listen for implications of more agreement than has been expressed while people have been presenting different opinions; offering (and taking) leads to get out of the mood of debating, and to start looking for some integrative solution (one that meets all major requirements of the situation)

11. Gathering up experience as you go through life: reflecting on what happens to you; learning to look at specific facts in the light of general ideas; and to discern general principles "in the ever-tangled skein of human affairs."

You may readily agree that, in some or all of these ways, most people need to improve their skill. But still you may ask: What makes anyone think that a person (especially if he's already an adult) can become appreciably more proficient in any of these skills merely by working for a few weeks in a case study group? That's a fair question. And here's our answer. Even within a few weeks a person with a lively mind may (1) identify some or all of these skills, (2) see that they're useful, and (3) start practicing them. (Naturally, the longer his exposure to case method, the chances that anyone actually *will* take one or more of those steps becomes better.)

However—and here's the big difficulty—being enrolled in a study group isn't necessarily the same as being enlisted in the aim of making desirable changes in one's attitudes or habits. (When that kind of change is in question, most of us prefer to act in an advisory, or supervisory, capacity.)

Chapter 8 was concerned with that difficulty. To put the meat of it in a nutshell one might say: *If a teacher believes in case method as a way to get results with people, and to keep learning how to get better results, then he must try to stimulate the experimental attitude toward experience.* As a starter, he may introduce a few ready-made experiments, designed to help people over the kinds of difficulties that are likely to crop up wherever people do things together. But a teacher can't know that the experimental attitude is spreading unless someone besides himself shows an interest in making case-minded experiments, selecting—or even

[1] The last part of that sentence is adapted from a statement by Benjamin Franklin when he signed the Constitution (parts of which he didn't approve). We found the quotation on pp. 75–76 of Learned Hand's book, *The Bill of Rights.*

hand-tailoring them—after sizing up some current opportunity (or difficulty). If some such experiment is initiated at a meeting of the study group, a teacher has cause for satisfaction, particularly if other members show signs of wishing to follow that lead. If, however, some member begins to try such experiments outside the group, the teacher probably won't know about it. But the results are likely to be more significant for the experimenter, especially if they become part of a continuing effort *to get case material* (on every subject that he thinks seriously about), *to apply case analysis* (as he lives through events), *to talk things over, and to listen* (when he differs from other people) *in the spirit and the language that befit case discussion.*

We have now said again what we've said before, that case method becomes most practical when it is practiced in everyday experience. But up to this point we have deliberately dodged the question: What is experience?

Let's take it up now.

PART FOUR

CASE METHOD AND EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER 9

HOW DOES ONE GET EXPERIENCE?

> If we neglect to gather up experience as we go, we expend the knowledge of every day on the circumstances that produce it.[1]

It is often assumed that by studying cases a person can add to his experience. What evidence, if any, supports that assumption? (And what difference does it make if *social relations* is the subject of case study?)

One way to look into any assumption is by asking explicit questions. For example:

1. What does the word "experience" mean?
2. What are some earmarks of a "solo" experience (that is, of experience by an individual who doesn't compare notes with anyone else)?
3. What mental activities, attitudes, and skills contribute to experience?
4. What is distinctive about "social" experience? [2]

First then—

WHAT DOES THE WORD EXPERIENCE MEAN?

Any such term is inevitably freighted with a variety of special connotations. But by referring to accepted definitions, one can establish a nucleus of meaning as to what the word denotes.

Definitions

In Webster's dictionary, the definition of experience (noun) includes the following:

"1. The actual living through an event or events; actual enjoyment or suffering; hence, the effect upon judgment or feelings produced by per-

[1] Thomas Paine, *American Crisis*, 1776.

[2] We take up the fourth question separately in Chap. 10.

sonal and direct impressions; as, to know *by experience*.... 4. The sum total of the conscious events which compose an individual life...."

The definition in Ogden's General Basic English Dictionary contains the statement:

"1.n. (Knowledge got from) observation of facts, events; event experienced...."

In spite of differences, those statements have much in common. And they fit in with Thomas Paine's comment. For one thing, they point to the difference between an experience and an outward event. To point up that difference one might say that experience happens *in* us, as a consequence of events which happen *to* us.

The Webster definition also makes explicit the idea (suggested by Paine and implied by Ogden) that experience is *cumulative*. At any given time, a person's life experience is the totality[3] "of the conscious events" —or the secretion of firsthand knowledge—which he has derived from direct contacts with his environment.

Experience Is No Accident

Anyone who accepts these definitions acknowledges, at least implicitly, that *experience doesn't just happen*. As Thomas Paine put it, a person must actively "gather up experience" if he wants to preserve the kind of knowledge which can be gleaned from events.

In thinking of experience as knowledge, one is emphasizing a *product*, the result of interaction between a person and his environment. In that sense, experience is what a person has made of what he has picked up. But it would be artificial to draw a hard-and-fast line between the product and the *process* of experience.

Each Person Makes His Own Experience

In reflecting on experience as a process, Berenson said: "What matters is not events but what we think of them."[4] What we think, yes. But is that all? Or does the answer to that question depend on what one means by thinking? Surely, achieving experience involves response by a *total personality?*

To quote Dr. Collier: "As I understand the matter, experience consists not only of the actual outward events that occur in our lives, it con-

[3] But exponents of gestalt psychology have shown that experience is more than can be expressed by any quantitative term like "sum total." A fundamental aspect of experience is its *qualitative* character. The *relationship* of component elements is a strategic variable. It is owing to the effects of relationship that the *whole* of any experience *is greater than the sum of its parts*. In cumulative experience, the effects of relatedness become increasingly apparent.

[4] Bernard Berenson, *Rumour and Reflection*, 1941–1944, p. 10.

sists also of all that we have thought, felt, desired, hoped, loved and learned." [5]

Environment Is a Preconditioning Factor

All of us make our own experience. But "our experience of life is profoundly shaped and conditioned by the particular culture into which we happen to have been born." [6] For example, a person with a scientific bent has stimuli and advantages in the twentieth century that never existed before. (And perhaps, even now, we have little idea of the new opportunities for experience that are opening up, at this dawn of the space age.) A somewhat different kind of preconditioning force is exerted by one's local culture. For instance, a person who has always lived in the country not only has a different kind of experience behind him than that of a person who has always lived in a city. When the country cousin comes to the city, he can't get the kind of experience that he would get if he had always been a "city feller." And when he gets back to the country, he may feel, more strongly than before, the strength of the bond by which similar experience binds him to people in his home community.

In such ways, a particular culture affects many people in the same general way. Nevertheless, experience is always partly unique. And probably everyone could cite many instances to show that even members of one family can disagree sharply as to the meaning of something which they lived through *together*, in the sense that all of them were living through the same outward events, in the same place, and at the same time.

Such differences bring us to the second question—

WHAT ARE SOME EARMARKS OF A SOLO EXPERIENCE?

An Aspect of Uniqueness

What a person brings to events partly determines what he can make of them. That idea showed up clearly in the cases of *A New Volunteer* and *An Engineer and a Machinist.* (The same general idea is illustrated in every other case that we ever wrote, or lived through.)

Another quality of firsthand experience is—

A Feeling of Inner Certainty

What a person learns by *direct experience* is something that he is likely to be much more sure of—and much more wedded to—then anything that he picks up at second hand. "That's something I *know.* I've been there, myself." Haven't you ever said or felt that?

Yet such certainty isn't wholly defensible on rational grounds. Most

[5] Howard E. Collier, *Experiment with a Life,* p. 11.
[6] *Ibid.*

adults who reflect on their experience are in a position to realize that what we know—by personal experience—often "ain't so." How can that happen?

Inaccuracy and Subjectivity

Any experience that depends on sensory perception has in it an element of inaccuracy, especially if one person's perceptions are not supplemented and checked by other people or by some mechanical device. But even a relatively accurate perception can never be identical with the object or event perceived. And when a person interprets the meaning of something that has come to his attention, he gets farther still from the physical world outside his mind.

Mutability

Because experience is primarily a matter of what we think and feel, it is subject to change. Perhaps you have noticed that feeling sure about something you learned in the school of experience doesn't necessarily mean that you won't have to unlearn it later. In fact, when you have looked back at something that you experienced many years before, has it ever looked to you precisely as it did when it happened?

Some alteration in the meaning that one gives to events is an inevitable consequence of the fact that experiences do more than merely accumulate. They don't pile up separately in the mind. Instead, experience is *cumulative*. Separate experiences come together as they form a totality "of conscious events" in a person's life. And this fund of *direct knowledge is inseparable from personality*—an organic whole which continues to change as long as it is capable of achieving new experiences.

Why Are We So Casual about Experience?

Some aspects of any purely individual experience correspond to limitations that are inherent in any single mind. But other shortages in experience come about because many of us are lazy about doing the homework that is required of us, if we are to get on, in the school of experience.

Most people agree—in theory—that firsthand experience is valuable. Yet many of us are extremely casual about experience-in-the-making. How can we be satisfied merely to stand in the rain of events, assuming that some of it will soak in, but not actively trying to gather up and distill a full measure of experience?

What Might Be Done?

Of course, many people do feel concerned to make as much as they can from the raw materials for experience. For those of us who feel that way, it might make sense to develop a working hypothesis as to what

needs to be done in order to achieve as much experience as possible. If such a hypothesis were developed, everyone would be in a position constantly to test it.

That brings up the question:

WHAT MENTAL ACTIVITIES, ATTITUDES, AND SKILLS CONTRIBUTE TO EXPERIENCE?

As a starter, one might consider the prerequisites for achieving even a bare minimum of experience.

Awareness Is One Essential

It's not enough merely to be there—physically—when events happen. One must be aware of what is going on. But no one can be aware of all that goes on, even in his immediate environment. Psychologists have learned that everyone is limited to his own "perceptual field." "This field is, for the individual, 'reality.'" From it he draws the material for his experiences. "It should be recognized that . . . only a portion [of that experiential field] and probably a very small portion, is *consciously* experienced . . . [But] a large portion . . . is *available* to consciousness." [7]

An extreme instance may sharpen up that general idea. If a person slept through an earthquake, as a friend of ours did, could his experience of that event have begun before he woke up? (Incidentally, that earthquake made headlines in many different countries.) If it were argued that our friend's experience began when the earthquake took place, that opinion would have to be based on the hypothesis that a person can be subconsciously aware of what goes on around him even in sleep.

A deliberate act of attention isn't necessary in order that something in the environment may enter a person's consciousness as material for experience. But there must be some degree of awareness, at some level of the mind. A person can't *make anything out of what he doesn't pick up.*

Some Interpreting Is Necessary

Before a person can transmute a perception into an experience, he has to attach a meaning to what he has perceived. Some people seem to assume that all the experience they need will simply rub off on them, as they pass through events. But anyone could see through that assumption if he looked at it. Experience is a kind of knowledge. And knowledge doesn't just happen *to* anyone.

Starting with such minimum requirements, what more can a person do if he is interested in getting a full measure of experience? Here's a hypothesis.

[7] Carl R. Rogers, *Client Centered Therapy*, pp. 483–484.

STAGES IN A CYCLE OF EXPERIENCING

1. *Preparing*—(getting ready to observe and to interpret what one might experience)
2. *Making firsthand observations* (absorbing impressions while living through events)
3. *Setting to work on first impressions* (to clarify, verify, extend, and organize them)
4. *Doing something decisive about one's perceptions* (interpreting, correlating, and perhaps also acting on one's interpretation)
5. *Letting recent impressions settle down in one's mind* (during a dormant period)
6. *Re-viewing, re-appraising and re-interpreting—by hindsight* (looking back on an experience *as a whole*, and fitting it in with other ideas and and impressions which constitute one's cumulative experience so far)

The Separate Activities Overlap

In any given cycle of experiencing, all these kinds of responses interpenetrate. For instance, sometimes the early phases of an experience follow each other so fast that a person reaches the stage of action almost as soon as he begins paying attention to some outward event. Again, it's possible to go on picking up impressions after starting to interpret—or even to re-view—something that has recently come to one's attention. And re-viewing an experience is one way of *preparing* for future experiences.

The stages in a cycle of experience are, therefore, not wholly separable. But they are distinguishable. And all of them are as familiar as every day. Therefore, under each heading, we shall attempt only to indicate:

What we are talking about, and

Why we think that certain activities, attitudes, and skills can help a person to make the most of his opportunities for experience.

Stage 1. Preparing

What a person can see—at any given time and place—depends in large measure on what he *looks for*, and what he *looks with* (what is already in his mind). Also, what a person can *respond to* depends, in part, on what he *responds with* (who he is as a person). Preparation for experience can, therefore, consist (1) partly in specific activities, (2) partly in previous experiences—both cultural and individual—in which a "bank account" of funded knowledge has been built up, and (3) partly in one's personality and current state of mind.

Making Specific Preparations

As everyone knows, one of the most effective forms of preparedness is previous experience with the kind of thing that one is going to observe and try to learn from. For example, in order to make the most of an opportunity to watch a tennis match, or listen to a Bach fugue, it's an advantage to have played tennis and to understand the structure of a fugue.

But a person who has no firsthand experience of his own to draw upon, in preparing himself for some new venture, can often tap other people's experience. The practice of briefing people is a familiar application of the idea that it's useful to have advance information on what to look for. Students who go on field trips and people who travel abroad without any briefing usually miss a good deal of what they might notice.

Preparing for the Unforeseen

Naturally, no one can make specific preparations for everything that's going to happen to him. But to the extent that *readiness for experience is a state of mind,* everyone can do something about it. A person with a lively curiosity, a capacity for wonder, and the wish to learn is in a position to make something out of whatever happens to him. Normal children have these qualities. But how many adults keep them unblunted?

Paradoxically enough, previous "experience can be a block" [8] to further experience.

Such a block is set up in a person who thinks that because he once lived through a certain kind of situation, he has seen and understood all there is to see, and to know about every situation where the outward circumstances are similar to those which he experienced. But anyone who realizes that every situation is new, in important respects, is always in a position to learn something that he didn't know before.

The next question is: When something happens to us, how alert are we as observers?

Stage 2. Making Firsthand Observations

Have you ever noticed how much difference there is—between different people and even within yourself at different times—*in receptivity* to impressions from the outside world? Have you ever asked yourself: What limits a person's perceptiveness?

Many of us are only too familiar with the extent to which fatigue and preoccupation can blunt perceptiveness. Have you ever taken a walk in the country when you were so tired or so absorbed in wrestling with

[8] For the full context of that quotation, from Rumer Godden, see pp. 70–71 of this text.

some problem that you were practically blind to the scenery? On the other hand, have you ever had the experience of being in the country with a naturalist who not only pointed out many things that you had never noticed before but who was also evidently finding something new in things which he had often looked at before?

But effective observing depends on more than alertness. The artist, the scientist, and the historian are specially skilled as observers. Each has his own way of looking at things. Yet all these ways have something in common. What might we laymen learn from them?

The Artist's Way of Seeing

A person who is a painter or a sculptor by vocation (and not merely by occupation) *looks intensely*, giving himself wholly to the task.[9] One thing that artists *look for* is significant *form*. (And when they reproduce what they saw, they know *what to leave out* in order to emphasize the essence of what they observed.)

The Scientist's Way

The scientist is concerned chiefly with facts and ideas. By unremitting study, he tries to notice all he can about whatever he is interested in. And the concentrated, continued, disciplined effort to see *as much as possible of what is there* teaches him to see far more than the average layman does.

Both the artist and the scientist, in the concentration and perseverance with which they question their environment, searching for meaning, have found a way to live more intensely than most of us do. "To live is to talk with the world.... All good thinking ... takes the form of questions and answers, as it interrogates the material which it studies. To sit speechless before nature is to drowse." [10]

The Historian's Way

The characteristic way in which a historian makes his findings is determined by his purpose *to render account* of what he gathers up. The demands that a historical report must meet have been summed up as follows: "Is the account true, reliable, complete? Is it clear, orderly, easy to grasp and to remember?" [11]

[9] A contemporary poet (and critic of poetry) has stressed attentiveness as the first principle of the poet's morality: "... the ultimate sin of the mind is the failure to pay enough attention." John Ciardi, "The Morality of Poetry," p. 13. (See suggested reading following Case IX for complete citation.)

[10] Richard C. Cabot, *What Men Live By*, p. 327.

[11] Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher*, p. 18.

Probably most of us could improve the quality of our observing if we consistently went about it with the aim of being able to report our findings accurately, clearly, and comprehensively. And to add interest to a report, without sacrificing accuracy, any observer can adopt the method of the social historian—trying to appreciate and convey the drama and mystery that exist wherever life is, or has been, going on.

Stage 3. Setting to Work on First Impressions

Having gathered some firsthand observations, the next question for everyone becomes: Shall I let it go at that?

Often we could, if we chose, make our firsthand observations into something more than mere *first* impressions. Is it because of "inattention and indifference" that we do so little to clarify, verify, extend, and organize what we pick up in casual observation?

Clarifying

Every adult is in a position to know that however vivid an impression may seem at first, it soon fades unless one does something with it. Have you never become aware, too late, that something which impressed you when it happened had become little more than "scattered, wasted circumstance"? [12]

One way to clarify any impression is trying to reproduce it as an accurate, clear-cut expression. Many a person has learned the easy way that explaining something to someone else helped to get it clear in his own mind.

Verifying

If perceptions are to be useful as materials for experience, they must be reliable. Yet it's easy to accept, as *factual*, secondhand information passed along by other people, especially if they speak with assurance. And few of us do all that we might do to verify what we pick up, even by firsthand observation. Perhaps what many of us need most is the will to be accurate. And anyone might develop that will if he made a habit of listening to his own language in reporting. When he describes something that he saw and heard, does his language meet specifications for straight reporting? [13] Or are some of his accounts that purport to be factual a hodgepodge of preconceptions, misconceptions, guesses, feelings, and unsupported judgments—perhaps interlarded with unverified statements picked up from other people?

[12] Henry James, *A Small Boy, and Others*, p. 1.

[13] According to exponents of General Semantics, straight reporting consists in statements of observed facts. It contains no inferences or judgments about facts.

Extending the Range of One's Perceptions

In relation to solo experience, we mentioned some limitations of any single observer. But few of us need to be as limited as we permit ourselves to be. For instance, no one needs to go through life hemmed in by all the prejudices and misconceptions that have limited his view at one time or another. But that is what happens when anyone habitually takes his stand on the assumption: "Because *I* don't see anything there (for example, in modern art, or in existentialism), there *is* nothing there worth looking at."

Anyone can open his mind—at least a little way—if he uses language accurately, to describe his experience to date and to indicate what might lie beyond it: "*I* haven't been able to see anything significant or important there—*yet*. But that's no proof that it *is* either meaningless or unimportant." As long as he holds onto the hypothesis that there may be more in the world than he has yet understood, or been able to appreciate, his situation isn't hopelessly limited. And if he wants to get into some area that has previously been closed to him, perhaps he'll be able to ride in on the coattails of someone who is at home there. Does he know people who care deeply about the subject (or activity) that has seemed to him pointless or unintelligible? If so, perhaps they can give him some leads that will enable him to see for himself at least part of what he has been missing.[14]

Organizing One's Findings

Naturally, the more extensively a person observes, the more numerous and various the items that he may pick up. And anyone who has made extensive observations may suffer the sensation of being swamped by his material, especially if he didn't do any organizing while he was picking things up.

What he needs to do, then, is to select and arrange his findings. Anyone who does that with his observations is using a tested device for proceeding from perceptions toward interpretations. Of course, this stage—like others—has inherent risks. Perhaps one's system for classifying observations will garble the meaning of facts which, after all, "*never* speak for themselves." [15] But this is a calculated risk that has to be taken by everyone who thinks for himself.

And any system for organizing ideas has advantages. For instance, sorting and relating material may show up inaccuracy and incompleteness.

[14] Anyone who extends his range in this way might be said to be preparing for experience. This is one of the places at which different activities intermesh in a cycle of experiencing.

[15] Barzun and Graff, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

And the effort to classify helps a person to remember whatever he was working on.

A homely example can illustrate these advantages.

When an experienced housewife with a large household looks forward to a long week end, she probably plans all the meals, checks her supplies, and lists items that she needs to buy. Perhaps in the rush of getting off to market she leaves the list at home. Even so, the fact that she has checked her resources against foreseeable needs may enable her to get all (or most) of the necessary items into the shopping bag. But many housewives have found themselves making a second trip to market at the start of a busy week end because they hadn't done their homework in advance.

When a person has organized his perceptions, he still hasn't done all that can be done to transform them into experience.

Stage 4. Doing Something Decisive about Immediate Impressions

Under such decisive behavior, we include interpreting, appraising, making decisions, and taking action. All these activities may be carried out almost simultaneously. But each of them can be a step by which a person deepens, and helps himself to retain, the impression made on him by something that happens to him.

Interpreting

When anyone interprets what he has picked up through sensory perception, he is applying a pattern-forming mechanism—his mind.[16]

What happens *in* a person when he interprets some item from his environment? Let's take a physical event, say, a thunderstorm. Before such a phenomenon can be meaningful—as experience—a person must be able to recognize and correlate what he perceives with his senses. For example, a child learns from adults: "That flash is called lightning. That noise is thunder." Soon he can apply these symbols for himself. Each time he reencounters this phenomenon, he associates it with other things that are happening to him (and in him) at the same time. In this way, thunder and lightning come to have overtones of meaning-for-him, special connotations that he lends to the outward circumstances that occur during thunderstorms.

Sometimes, interpreting is done while living at high speed through events. Then it can be little more than an intuitive response. But for on-

[16] Of course, this kind of pattern making begins (as selective perception) early in each person's life. Much of it may be done subconsciously. But it also goes on while a person is consciously observing. It is carried further when anyone winnows his observations by verifying them, and when he organizes his findings. But it comes to a head in analytical thinking, which is why we stress it here.

the-spot interpreting, as at every other stage in experiencing, paying attention "now" is likely to pay dividends later. Having transmuted perceptions into ideas, the mind has something relatively clear-cut to work on later.

Immediate Appraisal

Appraising usually accompanies or even precedes interpreting. Consciously or otherwise, one answers the question, "How important is this experience?" Sometimes a person makes no serious effort to interpret what is happening to him, because short-range appraisal suggests that the outward event isn't worth bothering with. But a connoisseur of experience knows that no event is so trivial that it may not yield some return in understanding. Therefore, he does not willingly dismiss, without consideration, anything that reaches his mind. What can he make of it?

Making Decisions for Action

Decisions are one thing that every responsible adult constantly makes starting from perceptions. The more experienced a person is, the more acutely aware he may be that on-the-spot decisions, based on off-the-cuff interpretations, may be inadequate later. Nevertheless, decisions must often be made under those conditions. And when a person reaches a self-reliant, considered decision, feeling responsible for the consequences, he further impresses on his mind whatever evoked that response. He also puts himself in a better position to learn, from something outside himself, than if he merely looks on at it, in the role of a passive and uninterested outsider, or if he reacts to it as a thoughtless, irresponsible insider. We know of no guaranteed method for reaching flawless decisions. But anyone can keep improving the quality of his decisions simply by learning from the decisions he has made. This can be done by anyone who (1) thinks rationally, (2) thinks for himself, (3) bases his decisions partly on observations that are as up-to-date and as accurate as he can make them, and (4) looks ahead, trying to foresee the consequences. When a person *re*-views a decision which he made in that way—looking back at it in the light of its consequences—he's in a position to learn something.

Acting on a Decision

When a person acts on a decision, events often provide a pragmatic test of his judgment. Of course, the element of chance makes this test unscientific. But the test has value, because the kind of knowledge in question is necessarily less than exact. A favoring condition for learning by acting on a decision is this: The action is consistent with the considered and self-reliant judgment which went into the decision. That general idea has often been translated into practical advice by conductors

of amateur orchestras and choruses: "Don't follow your neighbor, or you'll never learn the music. Make up your own mind when to come in. Then go ahead. You may make some resounding mistakes. But that's what rehearsals are for. And having made a mistake in a rehearsal you probably won't make it in a concert."

Any apprentice—a medical interne, for example—knows that even errors in judgment, when translated into action, can be educational. But decisions don't have to turn out badly in order to crystallize and deepen an experience-in-the-making. Lawyers, businessmen, social workers, teachers, parents—indeed every adult who lives responsibly—can testify that acting on considered opinions is one way to derive experience from events. After the stage of action, there are advantages in letting one's subconscious take over for a while.

Stage 5. Allowing Impressions to Settle Down in One's Mind

Perhaps no one understands all that happens while impressions and ideas work in a person's mind subconsciously. But many people have found that they can make use of this mysterious process. For instance, haven't you ever gone to sleep feeling baffled by some problem and waked up with a clear-cut solution in mind? If so, wouldn't you be inclined to give credit to the silent partner who supplemented your conscious thinking? Some people are convinced that they can get more help from their subconscious by giving it a definite assignment. Before dismissing a problem from their conscious mind, they think it through as far as they can. They formulate questions as clearly as possible. And they look for inadequacies in the first solutions that occur to them.

When practical people give and take the advice, "sleep on it," they are (perhaps unconsciously) paying tribute to the effectiveness of subconscious reflection. It's a truism that understanding anything depends upon seeing it whole and in relation to other things. But considered opinions as to wholeness and relatedness cannot be formed while impressions are being absorbed. And before a person can fully know what any new experience might mean to him, he must have time (and help from his subconscious) to realize it deeply.

The following quotation shows how an artist can learn to let his subconscious work for him: "I think, in truth, that the best writing of all is done long after the events it is concerned with, when they have been digested and reflected upon unconsciously and the writer has completely realized them in himself. . . .

"Long ago I went to visit Ernest Hemingway after he had been a couple of years in Key West. . . . I said to Hemingway: 'Why don't you write about all this?' And he said: 'I will in time, but I couldn't do it yet.' And, seeing I did not get his meaning, he pointed to a pelican that was

clumsily flapping along, and said: 'See that pelican? I don't know yet what his part is in the scheme of things.' " [17]

Many years later, that same idea was expressed by Ilya Ehrenburg to support his opinion that "from the twenties to the forties" some American writers were turning out better work than Soviet writers: ". . . the really fine American writer did not begin to write until he had accumulated genuine experience. A man like Hemingway wrote not only out of his imagination but out of the richness of living. John Steinbeck must have done at least a dozen things before he started to write. Anyway, the important thing is that they lived and observed before they wrote. Here, many of our writers write first, live afterwards." [18]

Carrying even further the idea that experience ripens in the dark of the mind, it has been said that: "Genuine experience is hidden. . . . It is not thought, but lived. . . ." [19] In our opinion, that's something of an overstatement. (Why speak as though thinking couldn't be part of living?) But we like its emphasis on inward living as an essential ingredient.

Stage 6. Reviewing an Experience

Everyone knows that an experience can look different at long range from what it did when it was happening. And some of the reasons for that difference are good reasons for looking back at what one has lived through.

For one thing, there's *more to look at* in retrospect. In reviewing "things past," decisions and actions that hadn't been taken (when an experience began) can now be seen by hindsight. And things done during an experiencing cycle can now be assessed in the light of consequences which were but dimly foreseen (or perhaps not even guessed at) when outward events first precipitated the experience.

Even an experience that is primarily intellectual throughout its whole span cannot accurately be assessed in the early stages. Which ideas—if any—among those just acquired will seem important and practical when they are used? No one can answer that question realistically until after he has done some experimenting.

That general idea was expressed by a Frenchman with a reflective mind at the last meeting of a three-week conference. Each participant in turn had been asked: "What has this conference meant to you?" Most conferees had already answered. But when it came time for the Frenchman to speak, he took issue with the question: "I doubt whether any of us knows

[17] Maxwell E. Perkins, *Editor to Author: The Letters of Maxwell E. Perkins*, p. 266.

[18] Norman Cousins, "Readers and Writers in Russia: A Conversation with Ilya Ehrenburg in Moscow," p. 15.

[19] Auguste Detoeuf, *Propos de O. L. Barenton Confiseur*, p. 81. "La véritable expérience est secrète. . . . Elle n'est pas pensée, mais vécue."

yet what this conference means to him. We might be able to tell you next year. But not now. We can't know until we have tried out some of the many ideas that have been presented here."

A second reason why reflecting may lead to reinterpreting and reappraising an experience is that it can often be done under conditions that permit relative freedom to think rationally. In looking back on an experience—in which the outward events are over—a person is freed from external demands that he act promptly. And perhaps he is also released from the internal forces and tensions that made him react emotionally. When outward and inward pressures let up, a person may begin to ponder implications which he did not even glimpse before.

Another chance for anyone to see more in an experience (than while he is coping with outward circumstances) is given if he can talk it over at leisure with someone else. (We mentioned this as a way of extending and verifying observations. But there can be more to it than that.) The relative detachment with which one can view past events makes it easier to give weight to an opinion which differs from one's own. We're not suggesting that the mere lapse of time enables everyone to think with complete objectivity, or to examine impartially what other people say. But haven't you found that it's easier to be rational in retrospect than when you were "on the spot"?

Like other activities which contribute to experience, re-viewing can do more for a person, the more he does of it. Each time a person goes back to a given experience with his mind, he may be able to see more in it. And cumulative experience becomes richer as the person who is thinking about what happened to him continues to learn by living. Experience teaches and changes everyone. What each person *looks with* is constantly becoming different. Therefore, everything that he *looks at* (including his earlier experience) undergoes some change as meaning-for-him. And perhaps what he *looks for* is different, too.

One kind of thing that anyone is in a better position to look for, after the stage of outward activity is over—in any given cycle of experiencing—is a working hypothesis. Especially while a person is all snarled up in the "tangled skein" (perhaps actively engaged in doing some of the snarling), he's not at his best as a seeker of abstractions. At that stage, what he's more likely to look for is some way out of his difficulties and some evidence that he's in the right. But later he may recognize that it's profitable to look for answers to questions that can't even be asked until after an experience has been partly assimilated. For instance, "What has this experience been worth to me because of what it has taught me? By looking back on what was said and done then, in the light of what I've learned since, can I see more clearly what may have been accountable for what happened?"

Not everyone makes a habit of reflecting on his experience, while there's still time to learn and perhaps to do better. But anyone can step up his capacity to learn from his environment by developing—from his past experience—questions that might lead toward increasingly productive experiments. When experience is what one is after, it's an exaggeration to say that chance favors *only* the prepared mind. But luck can do a lot for a person who keeps up with his homework. For instance: "If we make the sharpest picture we can of what it is that we want to find, then nature is full of suggestions that verify or refute it. Then luck helps us because our minds are sensitized to see what others would not notice.... We know (obscurely) what we are going to know (clearly)." [20]

That's our hypothesis. What do you think of it? Does it seem to you that the activities we have been describing can contribute to experience? If so, perhaps you'll agree with this general proposition: *Regardless of the scale of events that a person lives through, he can derive rich and lasting experiences* if *he pays close attention to what goes on around him, and exerts himself to learn from his environment.*

This brings up the related question: Might case method be useful to a person who is interested in improving his capacity to get experience; and if so, how? We think that it can. And here are some of the ways in which we have found it useful.

USING CASE METHOD: AT EACH STAGE IN THE EXPERIENCE CYCLE

Preparing for Experience

Because experience depends partly on ideas that one looks *with*, analyzing any case, remote or current, can be a way of getting ready to learn from future events. When a person goes into any case deeply, he may emerge with an idea that is new to him. Sometimes ideas are picked up during discussion by listening. Some observers have thought they acquired useful ideas *about* listening. And a few ambitious students have determined to make their listening more productive in future, both for themselves and for their associates.

Insofar as preparedness for experience consists in alertness, case discussions can be useful to anyone who has fallen into a relatively passive way of living through events. Curiosity can be contagious. Even a person with rather lethargic habits of mind rarely remains unaffected when people around him are responding enthusiastically to the interest and drama which they find in a case.

Most important of all, as preparation for future experience, a few students have reached the advanced stage of case-mindedness. They have recognized that anyone who analyzes a situation in the manner that befits

[20] Richard C. Cabot, *The Meaning of Right and Wrong*, pp. 140–141.

a case student can get something broader and more realistic than the partisan view that so many of us usually take.

Does It Always Work?

It would be absurd to claim that analyzing and discussing cases helps everyone to become better prepared for future opportunities to get experience. But working by case method can have that consequence. And it has had for people who have engaged in case study with the purpose of gaining insight to use directly.

Observing

Admittedly, the kind of observing that can be done in connection with remote cases is different from making firsthand observations of one's immediate environment. But techniques and skills that can be practiced as part of case method can be helpful in a current situation.

For example, fact finding—as practiced in the Incident Process—is something that has often impressed students who already hold responsible positions in business or industry. Many of them have mentioned that, in dealing with some actual incident, they have suddenly seen that a complainant (or a problem employee) could profitably be treated as *a* "man with the facts." How much could he tell them of what they needed to know about the situation in which he and they were involved? Others have said (in effect): "Now that I've prepared myself to answer all the questions that need to be asked about this case. I know what it is to be adequately briefed on a situation. And that's a lesson I won't forget."

To stress, in this connection, the job opportunities of everyone who works as an observer would be to labor an obvious point.

Working on One's First Impressions

Case method has much to offer anyone who wishes to make the most of his firsthand impressions. For instance—

Clarifying and Verifying

In discussing anything, a person can practice putting his impressions into clear-cut expressions. Did he get a clear impression of some speaker's meaning? If so, can he reproduce the gist of it clearly?

In that kind of exercise, clarifying and verifying merge. And anyone who listens attentively to *a case discussion* is in a position to notice some of the uses of verifying. Carelessness about factual information shows up quickly when the same items of information have been made available to everyone. A student who includes contrary-to-fact statements or unsupported inferences, when making what is supposed to be a factual summary, usually gets corrected by his colleagues.

Extending the Range of One's Perceptions

Case analysis, in a group, provides opportunities to recognize that there may be far more to see in a situation than any *one* person is likely to hit upon or fully to appreciate by himself. Even a discussion leader who has anlayzed a case intensively in advance may be amazed to find how many different angles there are to it when fifteen or twenty people say what they see in it.

Case reporting can also help a person to broaden his scope of view. And one kind of case in connection with which this has often happened is a case drawn from the reporter's firsthand experience. Moreover, everyone who listens to a firsthand report (made by himself or by someone else) may suddenly see how limiting a strictly I-view can be. Does it seem as though some ego-centered participant (perhaps one's self) must have missed a good deal of what was going on there? If so, what about that?

Organizing One's Findings

Anyone who wishes to test and develop his capacity to marshal what's in his mind can do so in a study group. Useful practices include: making summaries, defining issues for short-term action, factoring out what is at stake (in a given case) for the long run, jotting down one's reasoning (to support a decision), preparing an agenda for a stock-taking meeting, and trying to sum up (orally or in writing) one's answer to the question: What have I learned, during this series of meetings, that might be useful to me now, or in future?

Doing Something Decisive about One's Perceptions

Interpreting

Analyzing cases can be not only a *test* of interpretive capacity, but also a means of *developing* latent ability to derive meaning from events and behavior. And for that purpose, there are special advantages in working as a member of a study group. In such a situation, searching for meaning isn't a side issue (as it necessarily becomes whenever the need to get immediate tangible results occupies the center of attention). Here, it's the main business for everyone. And each member has chances not only to work at it by himself, but also to observe how others seem to go at it. For instance, people in study groups have often commented, with surprise, on the way selective perception seems to operate as a handicap in other people's minds, highlighting or obscuring certain items of information about a case. And when each member has a chance to lead a discussion, he can try his hand at interpreting a range of views.

Making Rational Decisions

In connection with remote cases, the most interesting stage of case analysis for most people seems to be that at which they compare notes on short-term decisions. Sometimes it is in listening to someone else (perhaps someone who is falling down on the job) that a person first clearly recognizes the value of relying on established facts, of weighing evidence, and of sticking to the question that has been defined as *the* issue for decision. The student whose behavior is sketched in the next paragraph gave a valuable lesson to several of his associates. (And his behavior reminded a teacher that mere exposure to case method doesn't always take—if a person has fallen far into the habit of thinking with his feelings.)

A CASE EXAMPLE

One member of a university seminar, which was being conducted by case method, showed a strong bias in connection with every case that was discussed. His prejudices so overpowered his rational faculties that, in thinking about any labor-management dispute, he always found for management. Finally, toward the end of the term, he was elected as a spokesman for an opinion group. But his statement of reasoning showed so little regard for reason, or even for facts, that at one point his own constituents challenged him. After that, members of another opinion group started taking his reasoning apart. And it soon became apparent that his so-called reasons were little more than feelings. Finally, he wound up (probably without fully realizing what he was saying): "Well, anyway, that's how we *feel* about it!"

(If he had been able to hear the operative word in his last stand, might he have felt moved to change his way of working with factual information?)

When people articulate their reasoning (by writing or speaking), they give themselves and others a chance to see what rates as a reason. In the small opinion groups, where like-minded members sift their reasons, a person has often (1) seen that something which he gave as a reason wasn't as weighty as it looked (when he was thinking by himself), and (2) found substance in some point that he overlooked or undervalued before.

In such ways, members of study groups can (if they choose) come to grips with the question: *How do I make decisions,* and *how might I improve the way I work toward decisions?* But making decisions about remote cases is one thing. Acting on decisions is another. Therefore, those of us who are interested in case method as a means of *developing latent capacity for experience* are naturally concerned to ask:

Must Case Study Stop Short of Action?

It has often been noted, as a serious weakness of case method, that case students are not in a position to act on the decisions which they make. When the case being analyzed is remote, that limitation is inevitable—and serious. In our opinion, it's reason enough for delegating to case students some responsibility as leaders of the study group.

Any leader is responsible for making independent decisions and for acting on them. In a study group, many such opportunities can be developed. For example, a discussion leader who prepares a case and serves as chairman for the day *is* responsible—and feels responsible—for the consequences of decisions that he makes. And this feeling of responsibility is likely to be heightened in a leader who knows that his performance is being watched by his associates, and might be surpassed by some of them.

When working as an observer-reporter, each student has other kinds of decisions to make. What will he learn from the action that he takes when he observes, interprets, reports, and makes recommendations?

Other possibilities for taking action can be realized by anyone who is willing to serve on some special committee (whose function it is to develop ideas for more productive work on some part of the group task which has seemed difficult).

There need be no lack of opportunity for people to act on decisions in a study group. All that's needed is (at best) that the full-time leader should plan for it, or (at least) that he shouldn't block it, when someone does it spontaneously.

But what about the next stage in the experiencing cycle?

How Can Subconscious Reflection Be Encouraged?

If a teacher believes that a dormant period is necessary, before new impressions and ideas can mature, how might he stimulate other people to experiment with subconscious reflection?

Getting a strong and vivid impression stimulates reflecting. Naturally, a teacher hopes that every case discussed will make that kind of impression on the mind of each student. And one way to work for that hope is to use some method of presenting cases that helps to bring them to life during a discussion. Any case that does come to life, either during discussion or in solitary analysis, has some chance of being kept in mind. For a while, it may seem to disappear, dropping into the dark of the mind. But if it once seemed important, it will return to the surface sometime. And when it does, it may bring with it some idea that wasn't attached to it at first.

Unfortunately, there's no way to guarantee that kind of consequence in the minds of other people. But there is a way to make it likely that each member of every case study group *will work hard enough on at least*

one case so that it will go on working in his mind for some time. Anyone who is preparing to lead a discussion may willingly spend a week or more in analyzing a single case and making a plan to help his colleagues see as much as possible in it. During that time, the case is likely to get quite a grip on his mind. Perhaps that's one reason why so many people have found that the most meaningful and instructive case, of all those discussed in a course, was the one that they presented. But it seems too bad that so few people have analyzed the reasons for that opinion. If they did so, might they notice that what makes a case illuminating isn't chiefly what's *in* the case to start with?

Every student who works as an observer-reporter also takes on a job which invites subconscious reflecting. Many people have mentioned that mulling over their notes, when preparing to write their report, has been a valuable part of their work in a course. But apparently few of these people have realized all that happened in their minds during the interval between taking notes and editing them.

Naturally, the person who is in the most advantageous position to learn, by ruminating (consciously and otherwise) on the situation of the study group, is the person *who feels most responsible for helping others to make the most of it.* In that respect, a teacher is lucky. But, to some extent, he can share the advantages of his position with other members. Any invitation to take part in the leading can be used as an opportunity to look for ways to make the situation become more productive. For instance, one kind of waste that has often been noted is this: by the end of a course, there usually seems to be little left of the remote cases on which people have worked so hard. What might be done about that? One thing that has been tried is to have some member (or committee) gather up and summarize—for the group—the general ideas and operative principles which have been arrived at as the essence of each case. Anyone who undertakes that kind of project is likely to keep working on it in the back of his mind—as well as by conscious thinking—during the whole period that he is (intermittently) at work on it.

Or perhaps in some group the most effective stimulus for a productive dormant period will be the invitation to try experiments. Many students have slept on the question: How can we overcome this difficulty (whatever it is) that has been blocking us?

Anything that encourages a person to let his ideas sort themselves out subconsciously helps him to prepare for the kind of conscious re-viewing that can deepen and enrich an experience.

Case Method as an Opportunity to Re-view, Re-interpret, and Re-appraise

In earlier chapters we have said a good deal about case method and reflection. So we'll keep it short here.

Case discussion invites realistic generalizing. Anyone who is interested in developing his capacities along that line may be able to do so by working with other people who are using much of [21] the same material when they formulate general ideas.

Anyone who has listened to many collegiate case discussions would perhaps agree that interest and proficiency in generalizing do not appear to be outstanding qualities among young Americans. Several cases given in this book provide evidence of "oversimplification and exaggeration" expressed in generalizing. For example: "Management didn't cooperate" (as a student clique saw it). And "workers are dumb and emotional," as a young engineer said, adding: "They're incapable of understanding what science is all about."

Working by case method could be worth while for anyone if it did nothing more than show him how he could become a "Man of Distinctions"—intellectually. All he needs to do, for a starter, is to keep his generalized thinking and talking in line with what he actually knows. To analyze and discuss cases, in a group, is to have occasion to recognize that: "No one sees farther into a generalization than his own knowledge of details extends." [22]

Any *firsthand reporting* can also stimulate reflection. In fact, if a person *writes about* something that he lived through, seriously trying to express his ideas and to make clear what he saw and felt, he can scarcely avoid doing some reflecting.[23]

To write a full-length case report which presents a multiple inside view of any social situation can be illuminating—for the reporter. For example, in trying to make an objective report, a case writer naturally describes his own behavior in the third person. And that use of language can make a difference in what the behavior looks like. Also, in trying to show his readers what other participants said and did, a case writer may find that he noticed more than he thought about at the time.

To discuss such a case report opens up other opportunities for a kind of re-viewing which can lead to a restructuring of what one has lived through. For instance, presumably the writer's reason for preparing the experience as a case is that he finds it interesting and significant. How will other

[21] Why "much of"? Because when anyone generalizes, he naturally uses not only information about the case under discussion but also impressions and ideas derived from his direct experience.

[22] Henry James (ed.), *The Letters of William James*, vol. I, p. 65.

[23] In a sensitivity training group directed by Professor Weschler, all members were asked to keep diaries recording (after each meeting) "their true feelings, opinions and reactions as to anything that may have affected them during that [discussion] period." In appraising the consequences of that experiment, the authors considered as "most important" that the diaries "helped the trainees to reflect upon and evaluate their own experiences as they went along." Irving R. Weschler and Jerome Reisel, *Inside a Sensitivity Training Group*, p. 3.

people respond to his report? Is the report clear? (Probably not, at first.) Is it one-sided? (Of course. The only question is: How much?) What shows through in the way of general ideas? (Do people see the case report as a vivid and convincing illustration of what the reporter intended to show? Or does an outsider seize upon, as specially significant, some implication that the reporter didn't even notice?) After listening to all the comments made during such a discussion, how much more can the reporter see in his own case—or how differently can he see it—than he did before?

In a mind that hasn't become inflexible, some reappraisal is likely to follow any serious discussion of a firsthand experience. But relatively few people seem to grasp this general idea: viewing any situation *as a case*, attempting to reproduce the facts accurately and vividly, trying to open up its meaning, and listening to what other people say about it, can always be illuminating.

Another opportunity to pick up that same general idea can be given by scheduling a few special meetings, at which the whole group is invited to re-view and to pre-view their performance. And a propitious time to do it can be at the last meeting in a course. Looking back over the whole course, what emerges as most significant for each member? Perhaps it is the session(s) at which he took the lead. Possibly it is a few general ideas, especially if he worked for the group (or by himself) to gather them together from the whole range of cases that were discussed. Or is it some experiment—for example, one that he initiated? Any member who takes part in such a meeting and takes note of what others say can gather up and preserve ideas that might otherwise soon slip his mind.

CASE-MINDEDNESS AND EXPERIENCE

In such ways, attitudes and skills that are associated with case method can help a person to extend and enrich his past experience, preparing to make more use of what he picks up in future. And any student who starts applying case method in his everyday life has found an effective way to cultivate his capacity for objectivity and for learning.

A case-minded student of social relations can see that every time he does anything with anyone else, there are possibilities for achieving a genuinely social experience (that is, unless the relationship is hopelessly hostile). What do we mean by social experience? We consider that question in the next chapter. But before we get there, here's another case. It shows a person living through a difficult situation—living through it at the time and afterward—in such a way that he could see more in it than if he had merely reacted to isolated episodes, each calling for short-term action.

CASE V. A CASE IN CONCRETE SOCIOLOGY [1]

Foreword

Any student of human nature and of social relations would naturally be interested in the general ideas which were Mr. Barnard's chief reason for presenting his experience as a case. But in condensing his report we have omitted most of his theoretical remarks. We would apologize to him for this omission except that he gave us permission to use the case in any way we wanted to. And what we decided to use it for is to illustrate—

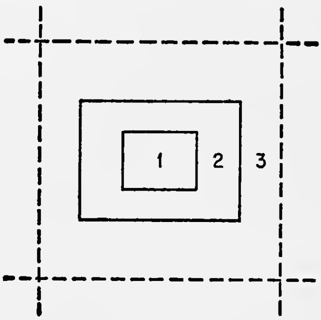
1. A *cycle of experience*—in which at least six stages can be clearly differentiated
2. A *way to share the fruits of experience*—by reporting *as a case* a sequence of events and behavior which the case reporter had lived through

In order to get the full picture and flavor of the situation that Mr. Barnard used as a case, we urge you to read his full report. But even the following abbreviated version should serve to indicate the characteristic relationship between—

1. A case situation
2. A case report
3. An experience

That relationship may be diagramed as follows:

Expanding Units of an "Experience"



[1] In the following pages we give a condensed version of a case report written by Chester I. Barnard. That report was first delivered as a lecture, in 1938, at Harvard. It was one of several such reports, all of them derived from firsthand experience and offered to students as cases in Professor Lawrence J. Henderson's course "Concrete Sociology." After Mr. Barnard had presented his case several times to different audiences, it was privately printed in 1945 with the title: "Riot of the Unemployed at Trenton, N.J., 1935, A Lecture at Harvard University, 1938–1941, Presenting A Case in Concrete Sociology." The same case report was later included in Mr. Barnard's book *Organization and Management: Selected Papers.*

KEY TO DIAGRAM:

1. The smallest unit represents a case situation: *a brief sequence of events, and behavior* which took place in New Jersey, during 1935.

2. The next larger unit represents *Mr. Barnard's case report*. This unit covers more than the *case situation*. For example, the report is more *extensive in time*. It describes events before 1935. And the *published* report (from which we quote) mentions things that happened after the "Riot of the Unemployed." Also, the report extends "upward" into the realm of general ideas. These ideas were, at least in the reporter's mind, the main point of the case.

3. The largest unit represents *an experience*. The dashed lines used in this part of the diagram are intended to suggest that:

   a. because many people were involved—even when the events occurred—no one person knows precisely, or fully, what experience was gained, even at that time;
   b. preparation for that experience extended backward—in time—indefinitely and in many lives. (Therefore, one can't precisely date the beginning of the experience.)
   c. *the process of deriving experience* (from events of the case situation) is still unfinished. This process will go on as long as any of the participants remember what happened at that time. And it extends outward *toward* everyone who studies Mr. Barnard's report; deriving some idea to experiment with, in his own experience.

"Historical Imagination" Is Needed

In order to understand the action taken by the case reporter, you will need to use what Charles Morgan called "historical imagination." Nowadays, the situation of unemployed workers is different from what it was in 1935. And doubtless Mr. Barnard, or any other practical man, would deal differently today with representatives of the unemployed. In order to understand the case, one must take into account that in 1935 a non-unionized, unemployed worker soon found himself on the dole and in the breadlines.

Moreover, in order realistically to appraise the ideas expressed by Mr. Barnard, one must visualize that participant not only as a unique and outstanding personality, but also as a product of the time and place in which he grew to maturity.

Introductory Remarks by the Case Reporter

In presenting his case report, Mr. Barnard's introduction included the following comments:

> ... my presentation of the case in this lecture hall constitutes a case in itself. You now observe my social behavior, in a situation in which you are participants. . . .
>
> ... I have participated in this case now in three ways.

First, when the events to be described took place . . . the action was . . . concrete . . . responsive [and] intuitive . . . I acted in, reacted to, and acted on that environment.

Second, on the night following the events, I analyzed the case. . . . What did it mean. . . . This . . . analysis [was] directed not toward knowledge, but toward further action. . . .

Third, . . . the present analysis . . . is intended for knowledge, not action. In it, I endeavor to use experience acquired internally in the case, but to present it as a whole. I am neither the center of action, as in my first contact with it, nor entirely out of it as in the second. In making this presentation I draw not only upon experience, both general and specific to the case, but also on general social knowledge. . . .

In that statement, Mr. Barnard refers to three stages in a cycle of experience: first, "intuitive" response, in decisive action during events; second, interim analysis in which he explored current events, seeking their meaning-for-immediate-action; and third, analysis after reflection, formulation of an experience as a case—a medium through which general ideas can be seen in concrete forms.

But by studying what Mr. Barnard has written and said, outsiders who are interested in analyzing experience can identify more stages than the reporter specified. For instance—

How Did Mr. Barnard Become the Man He Was?

Mr. Barnard has reported on previous experiences which partly preconditioned his response to the events of 1935. Here are four such items:

1. My grandfather was a blacksmith. My father was a metal polisher who finally owned his own business. . . . When I was a poor boy at Harvard, I used to walk around in North Cambridge among the finer homes and wondered how the heck I could ever get money enough to live that way.[2]

2. Before and during the time when Mr. Barnard was president of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, he had benefited by many years of practice in "deciding and acting under the burden of responsibility for the consequences." [3]

3. Between periods of critical action I had studied and thought much about human nature. . . . Much knowledge and much hard thought . . . had preceded the events.[4]

[2] That report was made during a round-table discussion in April, 1951. See Chester Barnard, "Basic Elements in a Free Dynamic Society—Part II," pp. 87–88, 91.

[3] On p. 5 of his foreword to the case (as published in 1945), Mr. Barnard quotes that phrase from one of Professor Henderson's lectures. Barnard and Henderson evidently agreed on the importance of such experience. The quotation continues: "The man who has the habit of action under responsibility is deeply modified and differently oriented because of this experience. . . . This is not conceived, and can only with difficulty be imagined, by young, inexperienced students, or even in many cases by theorists who without practical experience have devoted much study to a subject. . . ."

[4] This quotation is from Mr. Barnard's pamphlet (p. 5). All the following page references are to the 1945 pamphlet.

4. ... I had been involved in many situations more or less similar, and had directly or indirectly observed others in such situations. (p. 11)

One such situation is reported next.

Specific Preparation for the Climactic Events

In the fall of 1931, being on various grounds much interested in unemployment and the need for relief, I accepted appointment by the Governor as State Director of Emergency Relief in New Jersey. I helped draft the necessary legislation and then organized the State's activity in the relief problem. In this position I was to a considerable extent the policy-making as well as the administrative authority. Hence, I gave much thought to the subject, acquired wide knowledge of conditions and of relief needs, and for about eighteen months was in responsible control of the work. Having other affairs requiring my attention, I then resigned.... (p. 13)

In March, 1935, a new Governor and a new Legislature decided to revise the general organization of the relief work.... General control and responsibility were vested in a new board of ten persons. I was requested to serve as a member and ... was elected its chairman. It then appeared desirable that I should temporarily also serve as the executive head of the relief organization. (p. 14)

At that time, due to many causes, the morale of the organization was low, and its work in some sections was not well done. [One of these places was Trenton. Among the reasons for special difficulties in Trenton, Mr. Barnard mentions that] in 1935 it was in the charge of a County Director of estimable character and agreeable personal traits, but not strong enough for so difficult a task, and subject to interference as well as ill-informed criticism. (pp. 14–15)

Outward Events Immediately before the Climax of the Case

One result of this situation was that the unemployed in Trenton became organized in about eighteen districts, each of which had a leader. This group of leaders demanded by letter to present their grievances in person to the Relief Council. Such a meeting was declined by the Council with instructions to me as their Chairman and also as State Director of the work to meet these leaders. I appointed for the meeting a certain Tuesday when I could conveniently be in Trenton—Tuesday being the regular meeting day of the Council. (p. 15)

A Dramatic Episode

SCENE 1

FIRST MEETING, AND "RIOT OF THE UNEMPLOYED"

On the day in question a mass meeting of the unemployed was held in some assembly hall. After it, the crowd followed their leaders to the Old Post Office Building, then used for relief organization work ... where I was to meet the leaders in the office of our County Director. [The crowd of about two thousand or more] had moved from its indoor meeting place to support its leaders in the negotiations. Its mood was happy, not belligerent, and as the conference began it was engaged in singing popular songs.

At this meeting, eighteen leaders represented the unemployed. For the Relief

Administration were the County Director and myself. This disparity in numbers was intentional.[5]

[The presence of the] great crowd on the street, even though at first orderly, and singing popular songs in a pleasant mood, created a state of tension, under which neither my associate nor I, nor any of the leaders could behave as we or they would under more usual conditions.[6]

None of the leaders of the unemployed was known to me. Also, I had little specific knowledge of the conditions to which they would refer, or their recent history. In appearance, with one or two exceptions, they were large and powerful men. Most of them were badly dressed. Several showed effects of worry, malnutrition and desperation. Due to their dress and appearance, I underestimated their intelligence, experience and previous social status, as will appear later, but without unfortunate results. In manner and language, though occasionally excited and emotional they were coherent; and were respectful to me, in the sense of proper behavior between gentlemen, but not in the sense of subservience to my position. This favorably affected my own behavior.

I began the conference by having the County Director present each man to me, and I shook hands and talked with each of them. This was habitual behavior on my part, and not consciously designed.... I then asked the men to tell me their story....

While the conference was going on, the crowd outside was singing, and was generally in order. Then suddenly shouts were heard, the singing stopped, and it was evident that something important was occurring. All members of the conference rushed to the windows. Below we saw police clubs flying, women trampled, men knocked down. It was clear that it was a bad and dangerous affair. It also seemed to me a disaster in unemployment relief and for the negotiations I was conducting. It was obviously impossible to continue the conference without a considerable recess until the extreme tension could be reduced.

Fortunately, the attitude of the leaders was one of sympathy for the crowd as again suffering from misunderstanding and official obtuseness, and regret that their followers had come at all. They were, rather to my surprise, not hostile or bellicose; and it was they who suggested that the conference be postponed. I set the same day of the following week; and suggested that they arrange in some way to reduce their number to about eight instead of eighteen, it being obvious that without a recognized leader, I could not negotiate with so many participants. This they agreed to do, and departed.

An hour later, I left the building. The police thought it advisable to provide me with a motorcycle escort which I declined as unnecessary. (pp. 18–19)

[5] Mr. Barnard's explanation of that decision includes the following: "Where the issues are acute, the attitudes hostile, or misunderstanding is exaggerated, and especially when there is tension, it is desirable that numbers be reduced to a minimum.... In this situation there was one other reason for limiting the representatives of the Administration which I shall explain in connection with the ... second meeting...." (p. 16)

[6] Mr. Barnard defines "a state of social tension as one in which the attention of the individuals in the social situation is concentrated upon the *uncertainties* of their future personal status as affected by the events transpiring." He adds: "Its most apparent effects are usually, I think, to increase the cohesiveness within the opposing groups, and to extend the remoteness between them." (pp. 16–17)

Interim Analysis by the Leading Participant [7]

On the night following the events, I analyzed the case. . . . What did it mean? What would be the consequences? Who should deal with it? [This analysis was] directed toward further action; intended to condition future more or less intuitive behavior, or to select the ground of action, the strategic locus of future events. (p. 12)

In sizing up the situation, to plan for immediate action, two of Mr. Barnard's conclusions were these:

First, as to "the motive of the crowd (not the leaders). This was, in my opinion, primarily that of action—of doing something." [8]

In considering the motives of the leaders, Mr. Barnard says:

I did not think that adherence to radical doctrine, the class war, or organization solidarity nor the direct interests in relief were the points of attack or rather those to which I should adjust my behavior. . . . What these men wanted was opportunity for self-expression and recognition. Their organization gave them one opportunity, our conference [would give] another. To have dismissed the grievances as trivial, however, would have been to destroy the opportunity that was literally more important to these personalities than more or less food for themselves or families. . . . It is important for you to know that men often cannot talk about what they most want even when they are conscious of it. They could not say either to me or even to each other, "I am starving to be recognized as a man, as a citizen, as a part of the community." In this case, as in countless others, men talk and fight about what they do not want, because they must talk about something, and they even convince themselves that they believe what they say. (p. 26)

In line with his "diagnosis," Mr. Barnard made plans and took action during the week between the two meetings. In this way, he continued the

[7] In commenting on his own report, Mr. Barnard notes a "difficulty of most importance. . . . It is that necessarily the description, in its analytical portions at least, is pure rationalization. I shall tell you that I diagnosed the situation in this or that way, that I intended this or that . . . etc. This is all concocted by me after the events. When the action was taking place I had almost no time for rational processes. [But] this does not necessarily mean that either knowledge intellectually acquired, or intellectual or logical thinking processes had no part in the action. . . . Nevertheless, at the time of action it was and could have been used only in an intuitive way (not deliberately and consciously)."

[8] In explaining his diagnosis, Mr. Barnard refers to Pareto, but adds: "To this 'need for action' I give a much more important place than Pareto. . . . Now the difficulties of finding opportunities for useful or legitimate action are substantial, especially among unimaginative persons, so that a breakdown of habitual channels of activity is a serious restriction or penalty to them. The unemployed as a class suffer especially from this. Attending a mass meeting, congregating at the place of our conference, singing songs, were more than all else a result of the need of 'doing something.' Although certain 'foreign' agitators were undoubtedly at work, the behavior of the crowd was an innocent expression of a fundamental human need, notwithstanding that the conditions and the results were dangerous." (pp. 20 and 22)

"treatment" which he had already begun to apply before and during the first meeting. For example:

Interim Decisions and Actions

1. An immediate "objective" to be pursued before and during the next meeting, "must be to allay the tension." (p. 19)

As one means toward that end:

2. He "requested indirectly that the least possible punishment be given to the five or six under arrest." (During the interval between meetings, "trials in the muncipal courts took place.") (p. 19)

Another part of his plan for "treatment" rested on the following conclusion: "I must win a correct solution in order to prevent the spread of the movement and the demoralization of the relief organization of the entire State. I could not permit a prolonged and protracted public controversy without injury to all concerned." (p. 23)

In order to meet that responsibility, Mr. Barnard decided—

3. That he "would alone represent the administration." [9]

From what the reporter says in describing the second meeting, another interim activity can be inferred.

4. He made inquiries, in order to supplement what he already knew about the men whom he was to meet again.

One of them I knew about. He was a professional socialist agitator who had "made trouble" in other areas among relief recipients in previous years. He was intelligent, a good talker, well informed, on the whole reasonably well behaved. . . . Personal integrity was not a dominating but a secondary instinct with him—my original diagnosis was wrong as to him. . . . Of the others, one

[9] In further explaining that decision, Mr. Barnard says: "I now believe that I had diagnosed the case as one in which the instincts of personal integrity—or self-respect—would be the dominating sentiments of the men with whom I would deal. . . . If this diagnosis were correct, the most desirable approach would be for me to meet them single-handed. The reason for this is that, when there is a great disparity of position, rank, prestige, authority, in all of which respects I was far superior to these men, there is an initial fear or assumption by the inferior or subordinate that his personality, his position, his self-respect, will be or may be injured. I have myself experienced this feeling, which is often painfully uncontrollable, as no doubt have all of you. It is obvious that when the ratio is eight to one, however, this fear is allayed. [Meeting the men alone would be] an expression of confidence in them as well as in the merits of my position and attitude; for the man who is alone under such conditions is in an exceedingly exposed and dangerous position. He is far outnumbered . . . in the event of disorder. He is at a serious disadvantage in any subsequent factual presentation—one memory against eight. He is verbally subject to attack from, and may have to defend himself against, eight different points of view. . . . Hence for me to meet them alone [would be] something of an initial guarantee that no advantage of position was sought or would be taken. [The foreseeable risks seemed less important than the advantages, since this decision] was not only reassuring to those who were naturally fearful for their integrity, but it was positively complimentary, and definitely recognized the personalities involved." (pp. 22–23)

had been an auditor or accountant, the remainder (six) mechanics . . . half of them had owned their homes, although they had then all been lost by foreclosure. All were intelligent, generally good Americans, and independent and courageous men.

Note that all of these men, except the professional agitator, had recently suffered violent injury to their personal integrities—their respect of themselves. . . . In many the effect of prolonged inability to secure employment, and the necessity of accepting relief, is to destroy interest, ambition, self-reliance, and to produce the appearance at least of indifference or of servility. But in men such as were in this conference, the instinct of self-respect, self-defense, personal integrity, was still strong, but raw and tender. (pp. 24–25)

It also seems likely that—

5. Mr. Barnard inquired into and appraised recent actions and requests concerning relief in Trenton. What would these men be likely to complain about? Did they have any valid grounds for dissatisfaction?

Additional Background Information (given by the case reporter to help outsiders understand the context of the second meeting)

Both my corporate position and my official position in the Relief Administration were handicaps, in the sense that they tended to make the men fear my incapacity, because of "remoteness," to understand their position, and to make them dread a lack of consideration of themselves as individuals. The fact that my previous service had been successful from a public and political standpoint, that I was not a politician or professional office holder, that I received no remuneration for my services, and that no scandal or charges had ever been made, was an inestimable negative advantage. I use "negative" in this sense: I think it possible that none of these men knew any of these things, or if they did know them, were not consciously affected thereby. If, however, in any of the respects named the facts had been reversed, then the fears of the men would have been greatly increased and their suspicions aroused, for they would certainly have known about such facts. An unfavorable reputation under inflamed conditions is a serious limitation for a person in the situation in which I then was, and would have radically altered my behavior and that of the others. For example, I should probably have not dared to meet with them alone. (pp. 23–24)

SCENE 2
THE SECOND MEETING

Listening

[At the] second and final conference, there were eight representatives of the unemployed. We met in a small room around a table. . . . (p. 22)

The first stage of the conference consisted in the recital of grievances, demands, criticisms. It lasted for two hours, during which I said little, except to ask questions or to inject an occasional comment. It confirmed my diagnosis. I could myself have expanded the list of complaints to ten times what they presented. With few exceptions, the complaints were either trivial or related to past history, no longer relevant to the existing conditions. As a whole, they

were utterly inadequate to explain or justify the organization of the relief recipients, their mass meeting, or the time and effort of the representatives, some of whom could certainly have employed themselves to better advantage materially in the endeavor to obtain jobs. . . . (p. 25)

After about two hours of this, it seemed to me time to get into action. All the requirements for personal integrity . . . had been met so far as this kind of discussion could do it. To continue would have produced false sensitiveness, exaggerated egos, a hypochondriac self-pity, which is the danger of recognizing personality by obvious direct appeal. It was now or never to test whether the diagnosis was correct, and whether the treatment was suitable. So I made the following speech. (pp. 27–28)

The Fighting Speech

Well, boys, I think I know what is in your minds and what you are complaining about. I think you have been moderate. I could kick about much more than you have. What I will do about it is this: What ought to be done either in the way of correction of faults or increases of allowances, I will do if I can, because it ought to be done. That is the only reason I and many others are in this work —to give you the most aid that we legitimately can. I think some improvements can be made. But you cannot have relief in cash if you do not work, because the Council and many others believe that would merely favor the good-for-nothing loafers against the interest of you and many others. Moreover, some of the things you want we probably cannot do because we cannot get enough money, and we must be sure to make what we have go all the way round. That is in your interest more than in that of anyone else. There are some other things I would like to do, but will fail in doing, because we can only employ ordinary human beings in the Administration. You will not always be treated either as you wish to be or as we would like to have you. If you were doing this work, you would be subject to the same criticisms you level at others.

That is as far as I can, or anybody ought to go. But one thing I want to make clear. I'll be God damned if I will do anything for you on the basis that you ought to have it just because you want it, or because you organize mass meetings, or what you will. I'll do my best to do what ought to be done, but I won't give you a nickel on any other basis. In saying this, you know it isn't my money, and it means nothing to me personally. My position is based more on your own interest than on anything else. For the kind of behavior which you have been exhibiting is alienating from you the very people upon whom you or I depend to get money for relief, and I assure you there are many who object to giving it now.

. . . They were fighting words, and presented the position on which I was prepared to fight. And they brought a fighting reaction. (pp. 28–29)

The Counteroffensive

One big fellow jumped up with a flushed face to announce that it was only a section of high-hat people with money who objected, and who didn't know what it was all about anyway, so far as he was concerned. . . .

I said: "That's where you're wrong, and you have too many troubles to be wrong about this one. The well-to-do have lost plenty and are grumbling much about taxes and this or that, and lots of them have lost their nerve. But they're not the people who are opposed to you. . . . The people who are most opposed to you and whom you and I must pay most attention to are those nearest to you —those just one jump ahead of the bread line." (pp. 29–30)

The Turning Point

To my utter amazement, the socialist agitator said: "He's dead right. That's the crowd we have to fear."

The tension had been so great and the confirmation so unexpected that for a moment I was baffled. But the battle was over at that point. We had succeeded in uniting in a common view.

After another hour's discussion, one of the men said: "I think we better leave it in Mr. Barnard's hands. He understands our language and what it's all about, and is out to do the best he can for us. I think we would be smart to let him work it out for us." (pp. 30–31)

The Immediate Sequel

A few months later, I resigned and returned to private business. But there was no further trouble for many months and then in a different connection. A year or so later this group (joined by many others) occupied the Assembly Chamber in the Capitol for a number of days in the attempt to force certain legislative action. (p. 31)

A Review of an Experience

As I look back on it, I do not think I had ever before made a purely personal accomplishment the equal of this, or that I am likely to equal it again. Yet I was not impressed at the time—an indication of how intuitive and responsive my whole behavior was. In fact, I did not report on it to the Relief Council and I have never told anyone about it in detail until now, except a friend last week who asked what I would present to you. It seemed then merely another hard day and a tough job that was back of me. (p. 31)

* * * * * *

WHAT DO YOU SEE IN IT?

For instance—

On a Sequence of Mental Activities

In what respects does the foregoing (abbreviated) report seem to contradict, modify, or confirm the ideas about experience that were outlined in the preceding chapter? [10]

[10] Incidentally, Mr. Barnard wrote his report before we developed our theory of an experience cycle. But we studied his report while we were working out our theory.

For example:

1. How many different kinds and stages of mental activity are described by the case writer as having gone into the making of his experience?

2. Do you notice any overlap between different kinds of responses; for instance, between preparing and observing, between observing and analyzing, or between action, analysis, and reflection?

3. What comment by Mr. Barnard indicates that there was a marked difference between his immediate appraisal of an experience (on the day of the second meeting) and afterward (his considered opinion—when he re-viewed it)?

4. What statements—if any—suggest that the case writer broadened his view of the experience when he prepared and presented it as a case? If you have read Mr. Barnard's full report, did you find any indication that his ideas as to the lessons to be drawn from his experience were altered more than once?

On Qualities of a Personal (or Solo) Experience

1. *Certainty:* In what passages of this report do you find indications that the reporter felt sure about something that he had perceived directly?

2. *Inaccuracy and incompleteness:* What statements show that Mr. Barnard recognized and corrected any mistakes and altered any conclusions drawn from his direct observation?

3. What is your impression as to the value that Mr. Barnard attaches to firsthand experience? (Can you document your judgments by quoting something that Mr. Barnard said—in our condensation of his report, or in the full report, or elsewhere?)

Questions for Semantic Analysis

On the Language of Action

1. Aside from words that Mr. Barnard reportedly spoke, how do you interpret the language of his action; for example, in twice serving (without pay) as relief administrator, in deliberately giving the unemployed leaders the advantage of numbers in the first meeting, in asking for a personal introduction to each of these representatives, in inviting each to tell his own story, in declining a police escort after the first meeting, in deciding that he alone would represent the relief administration at the second meeting, in "requesting . . . that the least possible punishment be given to the five or six under arrest," in beginning the "second stage of the conference" by listening for two hours (although he thought he knew most, or all, of what the men would say)?

2. What executive functions are illustrated in action reportedly taken by Mr. Barnard during the time span of the case?

On Attitudes, Feelings, and Assumptions Indicated by Words

What—if anything—seems to you significant about the following language:

1. "... they ... were *respectful to me*.... This favorably affected my own behavior." [11] (p. 246)

2. In your appraisal of Mr. Barnard's attitude, what difference does it make that the phrase containing the word "respectful" [in the foregoing quotation] is followed by: "in the sense of proper *behavior between gentlemen*, but not in the sense of *subservience to my position*"?

3. "[The rioting] seemed to me a *disaster* in unemployment relief and for the negotiations I was conducting." (p. 246)

4. "I ... suggested that *they arrange in some way* to reduce their numbers to about eight ... it being obvious that without a recognized leader *I could not negotiate* with so many participants." (p. 246)

5. "The unemployed *as a class* suffer especially from this." ("a breakdown of habitual channels of activity.") (footnote, p. 247)

6. "I did not think that adherence to radical doctrine, *the class war* or organization solidarity nor the direct interests in relief *were the points of attack or rather those to which I should adjust my behavior*.... What these men wanted was opportunity for self-expression and recognition. Their organization gave them one opportunity, our conference another." (p. 247)

   a. In analyzing the foregoing sentence, would you agree with Korzybski and other exponents of General Semantics that using any form of the verb "to be" is going further than anyone can safely go in stating an inference? Other comments in which the verb "to be" implies that an opinion or intention *was a fact* include the following:

   "... when the ratio is eight to one, however, this fear *is* allayed." (footnote, p. 248) [in the minds of those who have the advantage of greater numbers]

   "... for me to meet with them alone ... *was* not only reassuring ... but it *was* positively complimentary." (footnote, p. 248)

   "With few exceptions the complaints *were* either trivial...." (p. 249)

   b. What are some of the advantages of this positive kind of language (especially in a situation such as is described in this case)?

7. "Both my corporate position and my official position were *handicaps*, in the sense that they tended to make the men fear my incapacity, because of 'remoteness,' to understand their position...." (p. 249)

[11] In these excerpts, all the italics are ours, and the page references are to this abbreviated version of Mr. Barnard's case.

8. "*All the requirements for personal integrity had been met*..." (p. 250)

a. How important does it seem to you that the foregoing words are followed by: "so far as this kind of discussion could do it"?

9. "To continue *would have produced* false sensitiveness, exaggerated egos, a hypochondriac self-pity, which *is* the danger of recognizing personality by obvious direct appeal." (p. 250)

10. "It *was now or never* to test whether the *diagnosis was correct,* and whether the *treatment was suitable.*" (p. 250)

11. "What I will do about it is this: ..." (p. 250)

12. "That is the only reason I and many others *are* in this work—to give you the most aid we legitimately can." (p. 250)

13. "...some of the things you want we probably cannot do because we cannot get enough money, and we must be sure to make what we have go all the way round." (p. 250)

14. "There are some other things I would like to do, but will fail in doing, because *we can only employ ordinary human beings* in the Administration." (p. 250)

15. "If you were doing this work...." (p. 250)

16. "That is as far as I can, or *anybody ought* to go." (p. 250)

17. "But one thing I want to make clear: I'll be God damned if I will do anything for you on the basis that you ought to have it just because you want it, or because you organize mass meetings, or what you will." (p. 250)

18. "They were fighting words, and presented the position on which I was prepared to fight. And they brought a fighting reaction." (p. 250)

19. "I said: 'That's where you're wrong....'" (p. 251)

a. What difference does it make, in your interpretation of Mr. Barnard's attitude, that the foregoing phrase is followed by: "and you have too many troubles to be wrong about this one."

20. "*The people who are most opposed to you* and *whom you and I must* pay attention to...." (p. 251)

21. "...are *those nearest to you*—those just one jump ahead *of the bread line.*" (p. 251)

22. "To my *utter amazement*...." (p. 251)

23. "...the *battle* was over at that point." (p. 251)

a. What difference does it make, in your reading of this language, that the next sentence is: "We had succeeded *in uniting* in a common view"?

b. What difference does it make when you read excerpt 23 in the context provided by excerpt 18?

Guessing at Connotations (by Reading the Context of Action)

In view of the action reported in this case, how would you interpret the meaning-for-Mr. Barnard (at that time) of (1) "negotiations," and (2) "conference"?

Appraising an Appraisal

To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with the following comment made by one of our colleagues after reading this condensed version of the case:

As "a purely personal accomplishment," Mr. Barnard seems to disavow it as "a case in concrete sociology," which was the contribution Henderson had asked for. As the State Director of Emergency Relief dealing with representatives of unemployed recipients, Barnard here practiced good social psychology in closing an incident of embroilment, and I don't begrudge him a little personal complacency. *Sociologically,* however, the situation centered, not just in dangerous tension caused by a riot (of the police?), but in considerations as to the social validity of "representatives" elected as spokesmen for thousands of heterogeneous unemployed trying to deal with the chief of relief in a collapse of private enterprise. Here the termination of the case leaves a bad taste in one's mouth, especially in relation to the problem of valid representation where massed numbers confront centralized power. There is no evidence of intellectual curiosity for discriminating the factors in this situation that present determinants of validity different from those in a mass strike situation.

What about the "eight representatives" and their need of satisfying constituents who might feel themselves to have been "let down"? Was there any hint to them of any possible roles on their part as *channels of communication with him?* Organizationally, their present step was, of course, to perform a quiet self-extinction.

CHAPTER 10

WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT "SOCIAL" EXPERIENCE?

> We can rely . . . only on a full acceptance of all the responsibility involved in our part in that unfolding life which is making both "facts" and ourselves.[1]

The word "social" has been used in so many different ways that even within the specialized context of the so-called social sciences, it no longer has any single, generally accepted meaning. For instance, sociologists use the word social in referring to *any kind of interaction* between people. In their vocabulary, punching a man in the nose is a social act. In the chapter on semantics, we ourselves borrowed the idea that language behavior can be regarded as social, merely because it has consequences for other people. And we have consistently used the term social *situation* to denote any system of relationships in which people interact in any way.

But if students of social relations are to think clearly about their subject, don't they have to settle on a limited connotation for the word which symbolizes the core of their concern?

In trying to clear up our own thinking on this point, we followed four lines of inquiry: (1) What kind of feeling, attitude, idea, and aim is characteristic of a distinctively social response? (2) What more can be seen in case references? (3) To what extent can the meaning of social behavior be clarified by comparing it with other kinds of response? (4) What advantages may be expected when people try to share their experience?

[1] Mary Parker Follett, *Creative Experience*, p. 150.

WHAT KIND OF FEELING, ATTITUDE, IDEA, AND AIM IS CHARACTERISTIC OF A DISTINCTIVELY SOCIAL RESPONSE?

Even when centering attention on feelings and motives (rather than consequences), a variety of social responses can be distinguished. But a *sense of kinship* is common to them all. Words such as "with" and "toward" symbolize the essence of social behavior. Compassion, sympathy, and empathy (feeling with), cooperation (as "co-action," in the sense of working affirmatively with)—these are characteristically social responses. Socially responsive behavior is always a "turning toward the other" [2] in friendliness, with some sense of involvement in his interests, and a readiness to help. A high degree of social responsiveness entails effort to understand the meaning and the purpose of what someone else says and does. It involves *feeling within one's self* the subjective forces which are affecting someone else.

The distinctively social feeling of *mutual responsibility* may be evoked by a personal claim—a need, demand, or desire felt by someone else. Or it may be elicited by an impersonal claim, in which one feels a sense of shared allegiance with another person or persons.

A characteristic social attitude is that of Membership.[3] In Chapter 1, we suggested that Membership makes a fitting point of departure for analysis and experiment by students of social relations. We return to it now as a preconditioning force in social experience.

When a person feels like a Member, what he thinks, says, and does reflects awareness of his *relatedness* to other people. A Member wants to understand, and to help others. He feels some responsibility about what happens *to* them, *through* them (what they do), and *in* them (what they experience). Anyone with this attitude is predisposed to make the most of opportunities (which exist in every social situation) to project his mind outside himself, and beyond the confines of his previous experience. He fully accepts his share of responsibility for what a situation becomes when facts and participants interact—each changing the other—in a spiral of response.

Recognition of Interdependence and Individuality

Douglas McGregor stresses interdependence as part of his "Theory Y" for "management by objectives." McGregor points out that in any organization, dependence is three-directional. Rank-and-file workers depend

[2] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, p. 22. In his text, Martin Buber was considering "the life of dialogue" which is similar to what we call a social experience, except that it is at the religious level.

[3] For an illuminating study of Membership—one that is both idealistic and realistic—see Alfred Dwight Sheffield and Ada Eliot Sheffield, *The Mind of a "Member."*

for employment on supervisors at various organizational levels. But supervisors depend for results on rank-and-file workers. And at all levels (except usually that of the chief executive) people depend on their associates, in the same work group or as colleagues at the same organizational level. But "... dependence is only half the story. The real crux of the matter is interdependence." [4]

When a person is socially oriented, he takes account of the interdependence which is a feature of every continuing relationship. He neither thinks, speaks, nor acts like a "separatist," an "isolationist," or an enemy. His sense of social reality reminds him that he cannot cut himself off from another Member, even when he dislikes or disapproves that person's behavior. He also realizes that it is unrealistic to lump together past behavior and a total personality. *He knows that everyone is, both actually and potentially, more than what he has so far expressed in outward behavior.* Therefore, the intelligent thing to do is to look for the other person's "growing edge," and for opportunities to help him develop his capacities.

But in acting on the implications of interdependence, there is no need to relinquish or deny the rights and duties of *independence.* These two kinds of requirement can be integrated in social experience. A social premise is that everyone has both a right and a duty to speak and to act for what he believes in—with due regard for the rights of others and for the "law of the situation."

A Characteristically Social Aim

The following proposal shows how social responsiveness could become a national policy: "Our objective, therefore, can only be the development of all men and women. Let us determine that we will do all in our power to help every human being grow to his or her full stature, that we will help every other nation to do the same, that we will join with every other nation in adhering to this policy, allowing at the same time full freedom to other nations to follow their own *methods,* however different from our own." [5]

WHAT MORE CAN BE SEEN IN CASE REFERENCES?

A social experience may be fleeting. For instance, it can happen in and between people who are strangers to each other. Perhaps they are watching children at play, or experiencing the difficulties of being taken for a walk in the city by a puppy. Even in a brief encounter, each may feel that he understands what the other is experiencing. This recognition

[4] Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise,* chap. 2.
[5] Pearl Buck, "The Artist in a World of Science," quoting Arthur Compton.

naturally evokes a feeling of mutual sympathy, which may or may not be communicated in words.

When anyone has the capacity to share another person's experience, by understanding and by appreciation, mere *spatial separation* can't wholly isolate him.

Robert Frost's poem *The Tuft of Flowers* pictures such a situation. It depicts a farm boy, working by himself to turn the hay in a mowed field. Tracing the flight of "a bewildered butterfly" who finally found a single clump of butterfly weed, the boy was sure that he knew why the mower had left it standing. Suddenly he felt: "Men work together" even when they work apart.

Similarly, anyone who responds deeply to a work of art may be able to span wide reaches of space-time with his powers of appreciation. He may even feel a stronger sense of kinship with an artist who lived long ago, in another part of the world, than with some contemporary artist. Or such a *sense of identification* may develop while watching a play, reading history, or studying a case report.

A keen feeling of *responsibility for the same task* may touch off a social experience and create a temporary bond even between people who work together only for a few minutes. In one case, a telegraph operator taking down a night letter over the telephone asked for help in spelling foreign names and words that were unfamiliar to her. A feeling of cordiality sprang up between the two people on opposite ends of the line as they worked together to spell out the message.

Often a social response is part of an experiencing cycle in which a person acts on his *feeling of being answerable to someone else*. For instance, a child may take your hand, or smile invitingly. Together you embark on some activity in answer to his unspoken wish. At an airport one day a woman watched such an experience develop between two people who were strangers to each other. A man was sitting on a bench, waiting for his plane to be called. From the other side of the lobby, a small child advanced toward him, book in hand. Soon the child stood before him, laid the book on his knee, and looked up at him. The man smiled, picked up the book, and started to read aloud.

When people continue to work—or to play—together, aiming toward the same ends, they can make considerable headway in developing the skills of teamwork. At best, mutual understanding and respect also continue to grow. In a small group, each member can learn what the others can do. And when a common purpose strongly moves them, all members know that the others will do their best. As each member continues to learn more about how to reenforce and supplement the others, the relationship can become increasingly productive.

A CASE EXAMPLE: PLANNING FOR THE SPRING PLOWING

The main ideas suggested in these few pages can be seen in a social experience that was achieved by General Grant and General Lee. When they met at Appomattox to discuss surrender terms for the Confederate army, both men were looking toward the future.

Grant set the tone of their interview when he opened the meeting by saying "I met you once before, General Lee, while we were serving in Mexico. . . . I have always remembered your appearance, and I think I should have recognized you anywhere." [6] A little later, it was Lee who turned the talk to the reason for their present meeting: "to ascertain upon what terms you would receive the surrender of my army."

Not a shading of change crossed Grant's face. He went on as between two good neighbors. "The terms I propose are those stated substantially in my letter of yesterday—that is, the officers and men surrendered to be paroled and disqualified from taking up arms again until properly exchanged, and all arms, ammunition, and supplies to be delivered up as captured property." [7]

After these terms had been formally written down, Grant asked Lee if he had any suggestions. Lee replied: "General, our cavalry men furnish their own horses; they are not government horses. . . . Any property that is public property you will ascertain that, but it is nearly all private property, and these men will want to plow ground and plant corn." [8]

Grant "hadn't known that private soldiers owned their own horses. In his own army the rank and file had only government horses and mules." [9] But he could appreciate the need of these men to have their horses for the spring plowing. And he responded at once by agreeing "to let all the men who claim to own a horse or mule take the animals home with them to work their little farms." [10]

This meeting of minds between military men who might have talked to each other as enemies has a bearing on our next question:

COMPARING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR WITH OTHER KINDS OF RESPONSES

In spite of the ambiguity that surrounds the term social, many people might agree that there is a difference between *individualistic* behavior and a response whose primary motive is *social*. But it's less easy to say precisely what the difference is, and what difference that difference makes, when people interact.

[6] Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years,* vol. IV, p. 200.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[8] William E. Woodward, *Meet General Grant,* p. 352.
[9] Sandburg, *loc. cit.*
[10] Sandburg, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–202.

What Is the Difference between Individual Interest and Social Interest?

Mary Parker Follett suggested that the essential distinction here is the difference between "the short and the long view." [11] Without moralizing, it can be shown that acting on a short and narrow view rarely pays off—in the long run—for anyone. For instance—

A CASE REFERENCE

Motorists often have occasion to test that general proposition, perhaps in heavy traffic at an intersection. If there's no stop light and no traffic officer, the situation rapidly becomes what self-determined behavior makes it. Sometimes it happens that a driver with a short view of his own interest insists on his right to go ahead as far as he can—even though any nonpartisan observer could tell him that he can't move more than a few yards. Perhaps this behavior lands him in the middle of the intersection. If others crowd in behind him and no one gives way, there soon develops a traffic jam which can be unsnarled only after a long delay, and by an experienced traffic officer. But a little self-policing often pays off for everyone—for instance, when a motorist voluntarily holds back, or backs up, in order that traffic may continue to move at right angles to the stream that is blocked. Anyone who takes that kind of action (out of friendliness or from a long view of his own interest) and others who benefit by such action can have a social experience.

Comparing Social Behavior with Antisocial and Asocial Responses

Whenever action is determined primarily by self-centered feelings and by a short view of self-interest, social experience becomes difficult to achieve. Anyone who has watched babies in a playpen may have had occasion to observe that genuinely social experience is not ensured by proximity, nor even by simultaneity of action associated with similarity of occupation and interest. Within the confines of a four-foot playpen, each of two babies may play alone, *asocially*, for a time. Each is evidently absorbed in his own occupation and apparently unaware of the other. Suddenly, one of them may covet a toy that the other is playing with. Then antisocial behavior is likely to follow—for example, snatching or quarreling. But at other times, the babies may play *with* each other, socially, each contributing to the satisfaction of the other, and perhaps even sharing a toy.

Adults, too, constantly interact in ways that can be antisocial, asocial, or social (in varying degrees) according to what they make of the opportunities that come their way. For example, in the course of every day, most

[11] Follett, *op. cit.*, p. 37. On pp. 38–40 she gives case examples. One advantage that Miss Follett saw in using the terms "short" and "long" was getting away from the "moralistic appeal of 'sacrificing' your individual interest to the 'general good.'"

of us communicate with other people. We do so in words and in silence, by action and by inaction. What is it that determines whether the experience is one in which a person *opposes* others, *holds himself apart* from others, or *joins* with others?

Antisocial Talking and Listening

Antisocial behavior is directed *against* someone or something. It is inconsistent with the belief that "we are members one of another." Often, too, it expresses an inflexible attitude based on preconceived opinions and beliefs.

For example, debating doesn't have to be an antisocial experience. But the feelings with which people prepare for it, engage in it, and emerge from it are likely to make debating a form of verbal combat. Debaters speak from and against prepared positions. In such a situation, many people feel that publicly to move toward the opinion expressed by an opponent would be to confess defeat. And experienced debaters learn how to sharpen their thinking and direct their words so that their language "may strike home in the sharpest way," without regard for opponents "as persons." [12]

Listening, too, can be antisocial. During debate, listening is likely to be slanted by feelings of partisanship. But neither talking nor listening during a debate needs to be antisocial. For example, friendliness and appreciation may be felt and expressed in applause or laughter when an opponent scores a point.

But when a person feels resentful or hostile toward someone else, he may lie in wait for something which he could use to injure a speaker, or to hurt the cause for which that person speaks. Could the enemy's cause be made to seem unworthy if what he says is twisted a little, or if part of it is quoted out of context? Might his motives be laid open to misinterpretation if what he said in confidence is made public?

Even the so-called language of diplomacy offers opportunities for antisocial listening. For instance, diplomatic representatives of nations that are aligned against each other in a cold war can make listening an effective preparation for propaganda warfare, in which "exaggeration and misrepresentation" are powerful weapons.[13]

[12] Buber, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[13] Former Foreign Minister Molotov's speech before the United Nations's General Assembly in 1946 contains a classic example of such misrepresentation by quoting out of context. Molotov said: "The other day you may have read in the New York papers the speech made by Mr. Baruch, who was fairly outspoken as regards his views on war and peace. On October 12th, at the College of the City of New York, he stated: 'Peace seems beautiful during the savagery of war but it becomes almost hateful when war is over.' Further in his speech Baruch was not sparing of words in expressing his love for 'freedom.' But it is easy to guess that his conception of freedom is far removed from

Asocial Talking and Listening

Martin Buber has described, as "the life of monologue," [14] the kind of behavior that we classify as asocial. Naturally, asocial responses are not all of a kind. There are differences, even in motive. But the characteristic attitude is one of *self-absorption,* and consequently of *indifference* toward other people, and of *irresponsibility* about interaction—except insofar as one's immediate interest is felt to be at stake. When this attitude dominates anyone, his behavior is influenced chiefly by factors inside the narrow circle of his immediate self-interest. He reserves his powers of understanding and appreciation for his own feelings and needs. He withholds himself from other people and their claims. While in an asocial frame of mind, a person can remain completely oblivious to another person's feelings.

A CASE EXAMPLE

That attitude was reflected in the voice which roused a young mother early one morning:

VOICE ON THE TELEPHONE (*urgently*): Is this the house residence?
YOUNG MOTHER (*sleepily*): No . . . This is . . .
VOICE (*sharply*): All right.

A click in the receiver indicated that the other person had hung up.

Of course, in looking at any such fragment of a case, from outside, one can't know either the urgency of feeling that prompted the call or the sequel, in delayed response. Did the telephoner wish afterward that she had expressed regret at having dialed a wrong number, especially so early in the morning?

A person with a severe case of asociality makes it his business to put himself first. He takes it for granted that he has a right to use other people as means to his ends. Perhaps he never puts that assumption into words. But the language of his behavior communicates his conviction that his feelings are more real and his needs more important than the feelings and needs of other people. And the characteristically asocial attitude feeds on itself. A person who pays little attention to others may be able to stay far enough away from them emotionally so that he remains untouched by what happens *in* them.

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the real aspirations of common people for freedom, well-being and lasting peace." (*New York Times*, Wednesday, October 30, 1946.)

In context, Mr. Baruch's statement about peace and freedom was as follows: "Peace seems beautiful during the savagery of war, but it becomes almost hateful when war is over. Each disputant demands a peace made in his own image instead of a peace acceptable to all. But there are some things more precious even than peace, and the greatest of these is Freedom."

[14] Buber, *op. cit.*, pp. 19ff. "The basic movement of the life of monologue is . . . 're-flection'; a turning of the mind inward." (p. 23)

Is such aloofness an unconscious defense mechanism? According to Martin Buber a full-fledged "monologuist" deliberately tries to keep himself "encased in an armour whose task is to ward off signs." [15] To bring the metaphor up to date, one might say that he protects himself against calls from outside by using a telephone-answering service. Perhaps, when hard-pressed, he even takes his receiver off the hook, leaving his line dead for the time being.

Naturally, a person who enjoys monologuing doesn't want to do without his telephone. He needs it to make outgoing calls. Often he calls on other people to help him. And it bolsters his ego to have an audience. When two monologuists meet, they don't talk or listen *with* each other. Instead, each soliloquizes in the presence of the other—"two or more men, meeting in space, speak each with himself." [16]

The activity of a monologuist, *while someone else is talking,* has been described as listening "to what is said only sufficiently to inject his own already-fashioned view at the earliest possible moment. He listens only with the outer ear. With the rest of him, he is preparing his own speech. In this situation there is no real listening. We have only two tangential monologues in process and neither person is in the least affected by the exchange." [17]

Antisocial listening is often both concentrated and sustained, because the purpose of a hostile listener is to pick up all he can that might be used to injure the speaker. But *asocial listening* reflects "inattention and indifference" to what another person intends to say. Therefore it is likely to be both diluted and unsustained. The following description pictures an extreme case of nonlistening:

"I had only begun speaking when he apologized, and reaching for his telephone, asked his secretary to make appointments for him [on matters unrelated to the subject which had brought the speaker to his office]. He jotted down things on his pad that had nothing to do with our interview. I faced his body. He said 'yes' and 'no,' now and then. But his mind was elsewhere." [18]

What Can Social Listening Do?

Listening can be a productive response which reflects and communicates (1) friendly feelings, (2) interest in what another person might say (if he felt free to speak his whole mind), (3) concern for meanings that underlie spoken words, and (4) a sense of responsibility for what happens in consequence of what is said, heard, and shared. A socially responsible listener naturally tries to correlate what he hears (in words and tone) with

[15] Buber, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] Douglas V. Steere, *On Listening to Another*, pp. 3–4.
[18] Steere, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

all that he can perceive in other ways. The following example may serve to illustrate that general idea.

CASE EXAMPLE: WHAT DID THE STUDENT MEAN?

Early one morning a professor, hard at work in his office, became aware that a student was hovering in the doorway. When the professor looked up, the student asked, hesitantly: "Are you busy, sir?"

If the listener had paid attention only to the spoken words, and had interpreted them literally, he could have answered informatively. And if the tone of his voice had conveyed his feelings of busyness and his annoyance at being interrupted, perhaps the student would have gone away. Instead, the professor looked at the student. He saw the signs given by the young man's tone of voice, posture, and facial expression. By correlating these signs, he plainly heard the unspoken request: "May I talk to you?" Thus he got beyond a clumsy verbal expression which—if taken literally—could have prevented mutual understanding and ended interaction before there was time to get anywhere.

Listening can be a productive way to "co-act." In the previous example, a listener who paid a little attention to meaning was able to understand *what was not said.* But listening at its best can do more than that. It can communicate a keen desire to understand and to help. And in the presence of a deeply responsive listener, a troubled person may suddenly find that he is freed from inner tension. Then he may discover within himself new ideas and unsuspected reserves of strength.

A doctor (without psychiatric training) made the following report on listening as a means of helping people to help themselves:

> It has been our experience again and again to listen while a patient described his problems, to be stumped by them and appalled at our own failure, and prudently to keep silence and make no answer till that very silence drew the patient on to say more than he started to say. Soon he begins answering himself better than we could have answered him. Before the end of the visit we have often seen him cheered and enlightened, not by anything we have said but by what our silent interest has led him to discover for himself. And then comes the comic and pathetic farewell, when he thanks us and tells us how much better we have made him feel! [19]

Anyone who is interested in communication as a form of productive interaction naturally wishes to become as socially literate as possible. For that purpose, he needs skill in what may be called the social R's.

Three Social R's

Reading signs. Instead of trying to "ward off signs," as a monologuist does, a socially responsive person is constantly on the lookout for them. If he is highly literate—socially—he can read and interpret signs that less

[19] Richard C. Cabot, M.D., and Russell L. Dicks, *The Art of Ministering to the Sick,* p. 193.

perceptive people miss. He can understand and respond to slight indications of feeling and purpose in other people.

Ability to read such signs has practical advantages, for example, when it is necessary to request or to order a person to do something. Without being a mind reader, a person who is socially alert and perceptive may be able to detect and decipher indications that tell him something about what is happening in another person's mind. Having done so, he is in a position to guess intelligently whether the message to be conveyed will be easy or difficult for the other person to understand and accept. Is there any indication that some request or order for action will seem untimely and unwelcome? If so, perhaps it can be postponed, or given to someone else, or presented in a way that will be less difficult to accept than if it were transmitted as a blunt request or an unconditional order.

Reckoning the intensity of forces within other people. Another practical social skill is ability to calculate the strength of subjective forces that push other people toward and into action. For example, is someone so emotionally disturbed that he cannot—for the moment—even *hear the voice of reason,* still less answer it in kind? [20]

A socially responsive person can often give himself time both to read and to reckon with such signs. The meeting between Grant and Lee at Appomattox was an occasion that called for these skills. Did Grant, perhaps intuitively, try to ease the situation for General Lee by delaying the talk about surrender until he had time to gauge Lee's frame of mind? [21] Certainly a socially literate person might have read, in Lee's tone and manner, not only his feelings of anguish but also his overriding concern for his men.

Making signs, to indicate purpose and feeling. A third social skill consists in giving indications of one's plans and feelings, doing so *with the purpose of enabling other people to keep abreast of what they need to know, and helping them to plan realistically.* A motorist may do this when he signals for stops and turns. But such action is social only when planned and timed so that it may help other drivers. For example, a motorist who doesn't signal until he actually begins to make a turn or comes to a stop performs a mechanical act which may meet the letter of the law. But his action does not meet requirements for socially responsible behavior.

Family members and intimate friends often avoid arguments by indicating—without words—that a decision rests on feeling, rather than on

[20] The case of *A Last-minute Request for Time Off,* given in the Recap of Part Two, showed an administrator in a situation where she needed this skill. It would have been unrealistic to expect that Miss Ordway could advance from her unreasonable position until she had time to regain control of the feelings which had precipitated the incident.

[21] Perhaps we are reading into that situation more than Grant put there. But many people do adapt their behavior, in timing and manner, so that they can respond intelligently, realistically, and appreciatively to what is happening in someone else.

reason, and that further talk will therefore be unprofitable. Between socially literate people such a warning doesn't have to be spelled out in words. It can be given (and read) in a tone of voice or facial expression (though the choice of words may underline what is expressed in other ways). For example, one day when a married daughter arrived at her parents' home, she was wearing a new wedding ring, one that was considerably wider than that which she had received on her wedding day. Her mother exclaimed: "Oh, you've got a new ring! Did you *lose* the other one?" The daughter replied firmly: "No. We bought this one. You know, doing your own housework, the way we all do, most people don't wear their engagement rings much. We noticed that lots of people have this kind of ring. It looks so much better by itself." Then she added, with even more emphasis, "*We both* like it, *very much*."

(Enough said—even when the listener is a mother with old-fashioned views.)

Exercising Such Skills Is an Art

None of these social skills is scientific, or even exact. No one can read another person's mind like a book—because the language of each mind is somewhat foreign to everyone else. No one can accurately compute, as though with an emotional geiger counter, the intensity of subjective forces in other people. Nor is it possible to send out signals of purpose and feeling which tell other people all that they might wish to know about one's frame of mind and future actions. Such skills are arts. But everyone has some ability in them. Anyone who steadily practices them can become more proficient. And all of them are practiced in some degree by everyone who is naturally courteous. It has been said that courtesy is "the habit of being gracefully considerate in personal relations.... It is more than politeness.... Chaucer set it beside truth, honour, and freedom." [22] The requirements of formal etiquette can be met by following the rule book. But courtesy is more than that. It consists in "turning towards" others, with the attitude described by Martin Buber in "the life of dialogue." It springs from the desire to adapt one's own behavior to the feelings and needs of others. That kind of response was made by Grant when he met Lee at Appomattox. Grant's opening remark conveyed his intention to talk, as a friend, with a former comrade in arms whom he admired, rather than as a victor who imposes surrender terms upon a defeated enemy.

Going Back to A Case in Concrete Sociology

Most of the ideas presented in this chapter so far can be seen either as "concrete" behavior, or as possibilities, in the situation reported by

[22] Ivor Brown, *A Word in Your Ear and Just Another Word*, pp. 39–40.

Chester Barnard. For instance, wouldn't you agree that his behavior was social in the following respects:

He showed concern for people who had to accept relief. (A cynic could interpret his service in the role of relief administrator as an expression of "the need for action," or even of a wish to exercise authority. But Mr. Barnard's regular job offered ample opportunity to satisfy such desires.)

He tried to reassure people who were at a disadvantage. (Do you see any reason to doubt his own explanation as to why he wanted the unemployed leaders to have the advantage of numbers at the first meeting; and why he tried to show, in other ways, "that no advantage of position was sought or would be taken"?)

He felt some responsibility for what was happening *in* "the leaders of the unemployed" and used listening as therapy. Here, too, we take his own statements at their face value. (Why else should a busy executive invest two hours in listening at the second meeting, although it soon became apparent that he had been correct in assuming that he knew in advance most of the facts the speakers would talk about?)

But do you see in that case any possibilities for behavior (by a relief administrator) that might have been less directive, and more distinctively social?

We're not suggesting that Mr. Barnard could have behaved differently, or even that he should have seen the situation otherwise than as he did. But suppose it had been possible for a person in his position to confer with representatives of the unemployed, treating them as leaders,[23] and trying to work out *with them* some integrative solution to difficulties which were their common concern. If the unemployed leaders could have taken part in joint planning with the relief administrator, isn't it at least conceivable that the situation might have become such that there would have been no attempt, eighteen months later, "to force certain legislative action"?

Such questions about past happenings are, of course, pure speculation. We raise them merely to suggest what distinctively social behavior might be and might accomplish.

And now for the fourth question posed at the start of this chapter—

WHAT ADVANTAGES MAY BE EXPECTED WHEN PEOPLE TRY TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE?

Whenever experience *is* shared—for example, as in co-active listening and talking—one benefit is likely to be an immediate release of individual power. And other advantages (immediate and long-run, technical and

[23] Might it be significant, as a clue to Mr. Barnard's attitude, that he frequently used the phrase "leaders of the unemployed," but never "unemployed leaders"?

human) can be anticipated because *the very effort to share experience is a productive way to work with differences.*[24]

Practical Advantages of Seeking "Integrative Solutions" [25]

When two people differ as to what should be done, how shall that difference be handled? *If each person tries to understand what the other is speaking for,* the way is opened for integrating differences by agreeing on a course of action which may meet all major requirements of the situation. Such integration of different demands is illustrated in the following example.

A CASE REFERENCE

A purchasing agent suggests buying material which he says is good enough to use in the company product. From his angle, it is the best material because it is the least expensive. But "the head of the production department says that he cannot get satisfactory results with this material. Which is to have his way?" That difference of opinion can be integrated if the purchasing agent can find a material inexpensive enough to meet his requirements and "at the same time give results satisfactory to the production manager." (P, p. 199)

Some of the advantages of such a solution show up immediately. Others appear in the long run.

For example, an immediate, technical advantage would be to reduce the cost of the product without sacrificing standards for quality. In time, the gain (resulting from greater technical efficiency) might be extended to the consumers, if the retail cost of the product could be reduced.

Another immediate practical advantage can be expected whenever people meet difference by "confronting it," rather than by "combating it." (E, p. 20) This is generating "power-with" people. When a difference of opinion is treated as a possible lead toward new insight, then energy and initiative can be released. Strength need not be wasted in *counter*-action; as it is when one person or group exerts "power-over" [26] another. When "power-with" is generated, it can be directed toward trying to discern, and to meet, "the law *of* the situation" as revealed "*in* the situation." (E, p. 152)

ANOTHER CASE IN POINT

A successful effort to reconcile different kinds of requirements was made when Grant and Lee conferred about terms of surrender for the Confederate army.

[24] This hypothesis is developed in two books by Mary Parker Follett: "*Creative Experience*" (from which we have already quoted), and *Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett.* (See Appendix II for full reference). In the following pages we quote and adapt many of Miss Follett's ideas. In order to avoid a clutter of footnotes, the source of direct quotations is indicated by E (for *Creative Experience*) and P (for *Collected Papers*), followed by a page reference.

[25] Miss Follett describes and illustrates that idea in both books. See especially chap. 4, in *Creative Experience.*

[26] For Miss Follett's ideas about "power-over" and "power-with," see especially chap. 11, in *Creative Experience.*

Outward circumstances and formal relationships during the years immediately preceding that meeting were not conducive to a meeting of minds. But evidently decisive factors in that situation were the willingness and ability of both generals to work together in planning for the future. Lee suggested an "integrative solution" to one difficulty. After telling Grant that Confederate cavalrymen furnished "their own horses," he added: "Any property that is government property you will ascertain that." Grant then showed that he did not regard as *decisive for the future* the fact that Lee's men had been soldiers in an opposing army. *Yet he did not disregard his official duty* to take possession of government property. By seeing and respecting the rights of individual property owners, a way was opened to help men who had been soldiers resume their normal lives as farmers.

Integrating Is More Productive than Compromising

The effort to resolve differences by integrating them would be worth while if only because it stimulates people to take a fresh look at the present, and to look toward the future.

It has often been said that getting along with people depends on ability to compromise. But doesn't the effort to compromise often lead to looking back, rather than to looking ahead? In compromising "you adjust but you do not create" (E, p. 46). The "new" agreement is sought, and perhaps found, somewhere between two preestablished positions.[27] "Each side gives up a little in order . . . that the activity which has been interrupted by the conflict may go on." (P, p. 31) In other words, people recognize some mutuality of interest, but not enough to work *together*, trying to meet all the important demands represented by different viewpoints. When people look for a compromise, they are not addressing themselves to the question: *How can we make diversity "do something for us"?* (P, p. 31) But that aim is implicit in the effort, by individuals who differ, to get beyond the confines of previous experience and to find a solution based on shared experience in a situation which is—to some extent—new.

Human Advantages

Both of our case examples illustrate another important, though intangible, benefit which can be realized when different opinions are integrated. Everyone concerned has reason to feel satisfied when the final decision meets needs, ideas, and standards that are important to people who started by differing.

[27] The horse trading that often characterizes collective bargaining illustrates the limiting effect of handling differences by compromise. During contract negotiations between a management and a union, it usually happens that neither party feels free to speak candidly. Union officers naturally demand more than they expect to get, and often more than they think the company could afford to give. Similarly, management representatives are apt to take their stand on a position which represents less than what they are prepared to concede.

Other benefits can be anticipated, in the long run, when people consistently treat divergent opinions and differences of short-term interest as opportunities to develop understanding and inventiveness. Take the case of the department heads in a manufacturing company. By conferring together, instead of combating each other, each administrator had a chance to think about a requirement that was important to the enterprise as a whole, though not immediately connected with his specialized function. When management representatives make a practice of sharing experience in this way, they are doing something that helps them to develop whatever executive capacity they have. An underlying organizational principle might be stated this way: No management representative will be asked to "subordinate the good of his department to the good of the whole undertaking.... His department view is needed in the whole. It must indeed be reconciled with other points of view ... but it must not be abandoned." (P, p. 301)

Acting on such a principle not only stimulates a management representative to broaden his mental scope. It also allows him to feel and to function as a Member of the whole enterprise, rather than merely as a specialist who has responsibility only for one part of the total operation. And when people continue to interact, as *Members of the Whole,* their relationships can become more mature and more mutually stimulating, instead of merely getting older and perhaps also more oppositional.

Enlistment or Enforcement?

In an organization, a co-active system of control can be set up when Managers act in ways that are planned to develop *power-with* all organizational members, rather than to exert *power-over* them. In the former system, every member is expected to assume a share of responsibility for the welfare of the enterprise as a whole. And in order that everyone may be in a position to do so, important decisions-in-the-making are discussed with people who will be seriously affected by them.

It is a commonplace that enlistment in carrying out decisions cannot be expected unless people have some share in planning what the decision shall be, and how it might be implemented. Giving subordinates a hearing on such matters does not require Managers to give up their responsibility for making top-level decisions. Why, then, don't all Managers always invite each subordinate to contribute ideas from his specialized experience? Perhaps it's partly because many Managers take it for granted that the worker isn't interested in goals of the organization as a whole, and that even if workers were interested, they couldn't contribute useful ideas.

Unrealistic assumptions. It has been suggested that unrealistic assumptions about workers and about the task of managing have been (and are)

preventing many Managers from "unfreezing" capacity at various organizational levels.

Three such assumptions have been stated as follows:

1. Man (the worker) is just incapable of directing himself to the goals of the organization of which he is a member. In this respect there is no life in him; he can only be pushed. . . .[28]

2. Between his own needs and goals and the goals of the organization there is no relation except through his need for a steady job in order to satisfy his subsistence needs, which are the main (almost exclusive) part of his inherent nature at work.

3. It is management's *inherent nature* to direct, manipulate and control workers.

There is massive evidence that such assumptions do not correspond accurately with facts that are so. Still less do they match facts that can become so when Managers try to tap experience and ingenuity at all organizational levels, and to develop all the potential capacity that now lies frozen in so many people.

Co-active control can be self-renewing because it fosters self-development and productive interaction. But "coercive control" is inevitably inefficient —especially in the long run—because it is exceedingly wasteful of human resources. Even when things seem to run smoothly under an authoritarian system, management cannot *compel* workers to do more than meet minimum requirements. If management were to put an inspector behind every machine operator, it would still be impossible to achieve the kind of quality control which comes only from self-control by an enlisted Member. And in the long run, coercion is self-defeating. It "sets up antagonisms in the other person or group that will defeat you in the end." (E, p. 190)

Douglas McGregor cites an example which vividly illustrates that point. A new Manager of a textile plant

. . . came into the weave room the day he arrived. He walked directly over to the [union] agent and said, "Are you Belloc?" The agent acknowledged that he was. The Manager said, "I am the new Manager here. When I manage a mill, I run it. Do you understand?" The agent nodded, and then waved his hand. The workers, intently watching this encounter, shut down every loom in the room immediately. The agent turned to the Manager and said, "All right, go ahead and run it." [29]

[28] This quotation and the next two statements are taken from eight assumptions formulated by A. Zaleznik, C. R. Christensen, and F. J. Roethlisberger, *The Motivation, Productivity, and Satisfaction of Workers*, pp. 415–417.

[29] Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise*, p. 23.

Consequences of Indirect Domination

Probably few modern Managers consciously attempt to coerce their subordinates. And certainly many Managers know that, with a union in the picture, they couldn't exercise arbitrary control even if they wanted to. But isn't an authoritarian attitude often expressed indirectly,[30] for example, in an effort to manipulate workers by setting up an incentive system? Most incentive systems say to workers in effect: We know that you're lazy, and that you work only for money. So here's a system that will enable you to make more money by doing more work. But many supervisors have been surprised at the ingenuity and perseverance displayed by employees who pit their wits and wills against management to beat the system.[31]

Even within the management hierarchy—often referred to as "the management team"—the limiting effects of coercive control have been noted by many observers. When a member of top management has a domineering attitude, even representatives of middle management are likely to feel (and to be) severely restricted. Sometimes the restriction appears to be self-imposed, in deference to the unspoken wishes of the boss. But if, for any reason, management representatives make few "self-initiated decisions," they are reduced to functioning primarily as "caretakers and watchmen." [32] And such restrictions may entail serious loss to an enterprise in at least two ways. Independently minded people who might be developed into future Managers are likely to quit. Others who stay on, functioning as caretakers, gradually lose their power to grow. They settle down as the mere organization men, whose fate William F. Whyte has so forcefully described.

What happens *in* a person, *to* him, and *through* him when his relationship to his organizational superiors is that of a "yes-man"? How can he be expected to develop his capacity for learning from experience if he has little scope to use his judgment independently? And how can he help others to learn from his experience if he is expected always to agree with the boss, rather than to speak up when he differs?

[30] Some of the accepted management terminology also suggests an authoritarian attitude. For instance, what about the expression "management aims"? Why should workers bestir themselves to fulfill management aims? Some such expression as "organizational aims" or "goals of the enterprise" would seem more fitting. Similarly, are the terms "trainer" and "trainee" suitable when applied to the leader and other members in a group of management people concerned with developing supervisory capacity? Doesn't training suggest drill in predetermined patterns of behavior, rather than self-development by mature and responsible persons?

[31] For an illuminating case study and a penetrating appraisal of such a situation, see Robert H. Roy, "Do Wage Incentives Reduce Costs?"

[32] Merritt Williamson, "Merritt Williamson Views."

What Are the Alternatives?

Everyone knows what happens in a "no-man." He gets into the habit of opposing and contradicting people, even when such negative reactions don't represent what he thinks and believes. And what usually happens to him before long—unless he is a genius, or otherwise indispensable to top management—is that he is invited to leave the organization.

Under a system of coercive control, a management representative (below the top level) must choose between conforming or being an obstructionist. But in a system of co-active control, a subordinate doesn't have to be either an organization man or a no-man. He can slip gracefully between the horns of that dilemma, winning—and earning—his freedom to be both an individual and a Member, by functioning as a "yes-but man."

What Is the Function of a Yes-But Man?

In that role, the prime requirement is a feeling of Membership in the enterprise as a whole. A yes-but man is a citizen of the works. And he works for the long-term good of the whole undertaking. He does not have the provincial attitude of a person whose allegiance is limited to one small part of the whole. He affirms and supports policies that have been accepted for the organization as a whole. (If he strongly disapproves any such policies and sees no hope of changing them, a man who values his integrity can't stay in that working community.) Yet, when asked for his opinion, a yes-but man feels obligated to report his experience, and to speak up for what he believes in. However, he recognizes the limitations of any *one* person's experience and insight. He knows that his own view is necessarily both biased and incomplete. Therefore, he wants to listen to his fellow citizens. And he tries to learn from them. If his organizational position makes him a management representative, he encourages his subordinates to speak from their experience. And at whatever organizational level he functions, he tries to unite, in a comprehensive picture, what he learns from all the experience that he can understand.

How might Managers set up a situation that would encourage *development by all employees of their capacity to work together, toward organizational goals, as yes-but men?*

Why Not Experiment with Some Different Hypotheses?

It has been suggested that Managers might adopt (at least as working hypotheses) ideas that are more realistic, and less insulting to their employees, than the assumptions that underlie systems of coercive control. For instance, Zaleznik, Christensen, and Roethlisberger propose that:

1. Instead of assuming that the worker is incapable of directing himself to the goals of the organization, let management assume that he can . . . if he chooses and has a chance to do so.

2. Instead of assuming that it has to put into the worker certain capacities (e.g. capacities for growth and assuming responsibility) [and that it could do so], let management assume that these capacities are there . . . but that as a result of experience, [they are not being used to promote the goals that Managers work for].

3. Let management recognize that motivating workers is not management's job. [Because workers are people, they motivate themselves].[33]

Those authors agree with Douglas McGregor that—

4. . . . it is possible to create conditions such that most subordinates will work toward organizational objectives because they want to rather than because they fear the consequences if they do not.[34]

Zaleznik, Christensen, and Roethlisberger further suggest that Managers might consider embarking on a program for "re-education of the whole work force and management. . . . What about designing a program for worker education involving the same concepts, methods and materials . . . with which educators and responsible management training officers are now conducting . . . programs for [all] levels of management?"[35] They note that "the costs and risks would be tremendous." But might not such a program prove to be the kind of "breakthrough—not breakwith—which is needed now"?

What Might "Experience Meetings" Do?

Miss Follett had an idea that seems well worth considering in connection with any program for organization-wide development. The core of that idea is *shared experience*. And the means of getting there might be case method. She was interested in industrial relations as one opportunity for genuinely social interaction. And she thought that "experience meetings" (E, pp. 212–256) might answer two questions that need to be asked wherever people do things together: *How can communication between men best serve the ends of men? How can we make the idea of democracy work—in practice?*

More specifically, the following are some of the things which she thought might be attempted, and accomplished, by such a practical "experiment in democracy." (E, p. 216)

Long-term aims: (1) To learn about, and use, all relevant experience of citizens, while also getting a vigorous response from "a participant elec-

[33] Zaleznik, Christensen, and Roethlisberger, *op. cit.*, p. 421.
[34] McGregor, *op. cit.*, chap. 3.
[35] Zaleznik, Christensen, and Roethlisberger, *op. cit.*, pp. 426–427.

torate." (E, p. 212) (2) To find a means of getting away from the "for or against attitude . . . which makes conflict." (E, p. 217) And to practice the skills needed to evaluate divergent opinions "while they are still capable of *re*valuation"; (E, p. 225) integrating them before they harden into opposed positions. (3) To find a "way of preventing an executive overhead . . . from acquiring a solidarity of its own and drifting apart from the rank and file. . . ." (E, p. 217) And to learn how to develop productive relationships between "experts and laymen" (E, pp. 214–218), and also between representatives and their constituents. (E, pp. 232–256).

Means, in a process. How should such meetings be conducted? By what steps might people learn more nearly "to master experience" and "know what it is" (E, p. 216), becoming able to recognize and articulate it at the level of general ideas?

The first step might be to present general ideas in a way that would clearly show "their relation to our daily lives." This would make it possible to "give people facts without an amount of dullness that leaves us with empty halls." (E, p. 212) And it would help people to respond vigorously, with feelings of "personal responsibility." (E, p. 223)

"The second step would be for each one of us to try to find in our own experience something that might throw light" on the general ideas proposed for joint consideration and cooperative action. As that effort became habitual, we might be stimulated "to observe and analyze our experience much more carefully than we do at present." (E, p. 213) And gradually we might develop "an experimental attitude toward our experience." We might try experiments, seek and report "reasons for success and failure," and make "suggestions as to what direction new experiments should take."

In this process of working with experience, and by it, "the third step would be to see if we could unite our various experiences, one with the other and with the material provided by the expert." (For this purpose, attendance at meetings should be "in small enough numbers to make an attempt at agreement possible.")

Are Such Ideas Practical?

Anyone might agree that such ideas are interesting—as theories. And surely they lend themselves to experimentation in a case study group—especially for students of social relations. But are they impractical for people in business and industry? One might fear so, if it were not that they have been successfully applied in the many firms which have adopted the Scanlon Plan.

So far as we know, Joe Scanlon never met Miss Follett or read any of her writings. But if he had tried to work from her specifications for "experience meetings," he could scarcely have come closer to her design than he did in

working out the Scanlon Plan. That plan started as a technical program intended to produce tangible benefits. As such, it succeeded even beyond Joe's hopes. But most people who have used the plan seem to feel that its most important consequence is the spirit of participation that it evokes. The Scanlon Plan has been amazingly effective in releasing frozen capacity, and in stimulating the will to work for organization goals.

THE SCANLON PLAN: WHAT IS IT? [36]

A Plan that Increases Productivity and Cuts Costs

The Scanlon Plan is a productivity plan. But it's different from other plans that have been called by that name. It is also an *incentive device*, a *system for eliciting suggestions from workers*, and a means of *sharing gains.* But its special features are such that it works better than other kinds of incentive devices, other formal suggestion systems, and other profit-sharing plans.

What's the First Step?

When a company has decided to install this plan,[37] the first task is to work out a formula for measuring normal productive efficiency. This measurement is hand-tailored to fit each company. But it always shows the ratio between the total labor cost, and the total value of the company product (as shown by sales and inventory).

Joe Scanlon and his successor, Fred Lesieur, have stressed the following points about this formula (or "measurement"): (1) In reckoning production costs the total payroll must be included. (2) In selecting a period over which to measure the ratio between production costs and the final profit, "the most recent year is always the best . . . because it's where you are." If necessary, adjustments can be made "to fit new developments." (p. 43) (3) The "measurement" should be simple enough so that every worker can understand it. "You have to stay away from the mumbo-jumbo type of incentive measurements that are plaguing many plants today." (p. 43)

How Does the Plan Work?

Productive efficiency increases when suggestions pour in "as to how time and effort can be saved." (pp. 24–25) Curiously enough, efficiency has always increased considerably. This has happened even in companies where top management thought that efficiency was already so high there was little

[36] For a complete and authoritative statement, see Frederick Lesieur (ed.), *The Scanlon Plan.* Most of the following brief description is taken from one chapter written by Fred Lesieur, formerly Joe Scanlon's assistant, and now his successor.

[37] In unionized concerns, this decision has always been made after consultation with union officers. Often the idea of trying the Plan has been proposed by a union.

room for improvement. Where do the suggestions come from? They come from all over the plant. Productive ideas have often been suggested by so-called "nonproductive" workers, for example, people in the accounting department. And why should nonproductive workers be interested? Perhaps partly because, under the Plan, they too will benefit financially by increases in productive efficiency.

As a system for sharing profits, three distinctive features of the Plan are these: (1) the profit which results from adopting a suggestion is treated as a "*contribution to the whole group*" (p. 47)—instead of being shared only with the person or group that made a money-saving suggestion; (2) profits, when there are any, are *paid monthly* (instead of only once a year, as in other profit-sharing plans); (3) in most Scanlon Plan companies, *every member of the organization* receives a share of the gains (except perhaps the president). The amount is usually worked out as a percentage of the regular salary or base wage.[38]

Special Advantages

Advantages for Labor Relations

Joe Scanlon had years of experience as a steelworker and as a union officer before he got the idea which developed into the Scanlon Plan. Therefore, he knew how much workers and union officers could contribute, how to gain their cooperation, and how to avoid antagonizing them.

For instance, discussions under the Scanlon Plan are kept separate both from the grievance procedure and from negotiation and administration of the labor agreement.[39]

Important advantages become apparent as *union officers and management representatives—both staff and line—confer together regularly, and with a common purpose,* instead of getting "together only when there is trouble." (p. 38) One of the chief benefits is that union members and their officers now find it advantageous to share with management the experience that they have gained in "doing jobs day in and day out." (p. 38) And in listening to such reports from experience, management representatives have a chance to find out that union members (and even union officers) can think up ideas which contribute to efficiency.

[38] In the early days of the Plan, the entire profit made possible by increased efficiency was paid to participants. A 1% gain in efficiency meant a 1% bonus payment. But, later that procedure was modified. Usually, nowadays, the gain is divided; 75% going to participants, and 25% to the company. (p. 45)

[39] Naturally, some of the suggestions discussed at committee meetings, under the Scanlon Plan, have to do with matters about which grievances have been filed. But *attention always centers on the solution, rather than on the dissatisfaction.*

Advantages for Personnel Relations

Opportunity for all employees to function as idea men and as yes-but men (rather than merely as subordinates who do what they are told) gives personnel relations a quality that cannot be achieved under any authoritarian system. Moreover, the Scanlon Plan, unlike other incentive systems, does not set up relations of destructive rivalry between workers. Nor does it put workers and management representatives in opposite camps. Instead, it creates conditions under which all employees can and do work together, "on the product going out the door." Each does his best to see to it that there is "more of a better product going out at a lower cost." (p. 37)

Anyone who is familiar with the kind of relationship that exists in most factories between workers and management representatives, between production workers and nonproductive (or "indirect") workers, and especially between workers and industrial engineers, may find it difficult to believe that, under the Scanlon Plan, people in all these roles learn how to work *with* each other and come to respect each other.

The following comments indicate something about the characteristic quality of these relationships before the Scanlon Plan is installed: "Most incentive or direct workers feel . . . that they are carrying the load of the whole plant on their backs. They think that the so-called indirect [workers] are only in the way, and if these people weren't around things would be much better." (p. 35)

At Lapointe (where the Scanlon Plan has been operating for more than twelve years) "a number of workers . . . who feel that they can now talk with freedom, admit that in the old pre-Plan days they never associated themselves or their jobs with the profits of the company and maybe even got a little kick when they heard that the top floor was using red ink." [40]

But when the Plan has been operating for a while, everyone can see that accountants, as well as people in every other job, are doing work that is necessary and in its own way productive. Indeed, "this particular group can make a contribution that is probably unparalleled in the firm." (p. 39) The accounting department has a record of facts that every employee wants to know about and to understand, *as soon as he becomes interested in the ratio between costs and profits*. In most companies, management tries in vain to interest workers in statements about the financial position of the enterprise. It seems that workers rarely read the statistics that show productive efficiency, or general statements about profits and losses. But under the Scanlon Plan it's different. General ideas become meaningful when

[40] Russell Davenport, *The Scanlon Plan, op. cit.*, p. 25.

they can be seen in the context of "everyday interests" (as Miss Follett suggested). And as soon as workers begin to feel a "personal responsibility" for company profits, they want to see and to understand the figures that represent facts. Under the Scanlon Plan, therefore, accountants learn to do what has often been considered impossible; that is, to get away from jargon and to translate their records into simple language which can be understood by "men and women in the plant." (p. 39)

Must Managers Abdicate?

Some Managers have been leery of the Plan. They have feared that it would restrict management's right to manage. But Managers who have adopted the Plan haven't found that it limited their scope (though often it has given management representatives more incentive to demonstrate managerial ability). Under the Plan, management still "has its job to do. The union and employees have their jobs to do," too. (p. 38) But now everyone can see and do his job differently. For instance, "the foreman, under the Scanlon Plan, is not a traffic cop trying to chase people out of the rest rooms . . . and to make sure they are at their machines." It is now recognized that one of his chief responsibilities is "to sit down with his people and give them the help that he can by leading them." (p. 38)

A CASE EXAMPLE

[At Lapointe,] when we first adopted the plan, the company felt we had a large enough backlog of orders to carry us through any amount of increase in productivity that they thought possible. At the end of three months, the company could readily see that this backlog was nowhere near large enough. A meeting was called between the union and the company to discuss this problem. The company announced that the president and the vice-president were going out on the road to see what they could do about bringing more business in. During the discussion, it was discovered that even if they were able to get more business immediately, it would take from four to six weeks to get the necessary blueprints made. So we were faced with the problem of not having enough work for the people in the factory. It was decided to carry these people on (and this number amounted to between fifty and sixty workers) until there was enough work for everyone. But the union and the company fully understood that there could not be any bonuses earned during this period. When new orders began to come in, we were approaching our vacation time. We were all amazed to find that engineering offered to forego its vacation until a later date and work while the factory was shut down. [In view of the] constant bickering between the factory and engineering on production problems [before the Plan was installed such cooperation from the engineers] surprised us workers out in the factory. We even began to think that maybe the engineers were also human. (p. 159)

Advantages for Employee Development

The Scanlon Plan was not designed as a program for company-wide employee development. But that has been one of its important consequences, wherever it has been applied for any considerable length of time. (And perhaps its educational benefits have been gained all the more easily because they have come as by-products, instead of being deliberately sought, in formal training sessions.) But in order to appreciate how the Plan works as a development program, one must know something about the committee system by which it operates.

There are two kinds of committee, each with its own functions.

Production committees. These committees "are established throughout the company.... Each major department has a production committee." Each production committee meets at least once a month. "These committees have representation from both management and labor." [41]

On these production committees, the duties of management members, union officers, and other employee representatives are complementary. For instance, one responsibility of the management member is to provide other committee members with advance information on operating difficulties that he knows about. "The job of the union or employee side of the committee is to convince the management member that the suggestions brought in should be tried or adopted." (Often a committee member brings to a meeting the person whose suggestion he is sponsoring, in order that the whole committee may hear directly from the originator of the idea and question him directly, if they wish to do so.)

"Management reserves the right to accept or reject any suggestions that may come in." But no suggestion "can be thrown out" at the production committee level. A suggestion can be "rejected" by a production committee, if there is unanimous agreement that it "is not feasible." (But all such decisions are subject to review by the screening committee.) A suggestion can be accepted by a production committee by unanimous approval if it is within the scope of their authority. "There is no voting... on the acceptance or rejection of a suggestion." "An accurate record is kept of the disposition of each suggestion." And minutes of these meetings are "forwarded as quickly as possible to the screening committee."

The screening committee. This committee is made up of people at top

[41] "Management usually appoints as its member the supervisor of the department or some management person" with authority to make decisions for the company. Union members (or unorganized employees) "elect someone to represent them on this production committee." Usually there is not a "balanced representation on these committees, for there are sometimes as many as six union or employee members meeting with one management member." Quotations in this subsection are taken from pp. 46–48 of Fred Lesieur's chapter in *The Scanlon Plan.*

management levels. "Someone like a president or executive vice-president of the company chairs the meeting." "On the union and employee side, the committee is made up of representatives from the areas covered by the production committees. . . . Also, the president of the local union is a member of the screening committee." There are usually four to six management representatives and an equal number of union (or employee) representatives. The screening committee, too, meets "at least once a month. . . . The first order of business is to screen the figures for the previous month and announce the bonus or deficit for that month." A second function is to discuss "anything that might affect the Plan," such as "problems that sales people run into in getting new orders." A third function is to screen all suggestions that have been sent in by production committees. Those that have been accepted and put into effect are recorded. Those that have been rejected by a production committee are reviewed. And decisions are also made about suggestions concerning which there was "a difference of opinion at the production committee level." On the screening committee, as on production committees, decisions are not reached by voting.

Opportunities for development by rank-and-file workers. When a worker finds it advantageous to tell management what he knows about the most efficient way of doing his job, he is in a position both to teach and to learn. Also, being elected to a production committee or having a suggestion accepted by such a committee endows a worker with the kind of prestige which almost everyone values and wants to earn. And contributing to decisions, *with* a management representative (instead of merely following orders), challenges a rank-and-file worker to put his ideas in shape and to express them as clearly as he can. Moreover, when all employees are expected to contribute ideas as well as work, supervisors can gauge their actual and potential capacity far better than under conditions where workers clam up, or even hold down production, because they don't feel enlisted in management objectives.

What about costs and risks? Why couldn't committee meetings under the Scanlon Plan be regarded as part of a program for worker education? If that were done, wouldn't most of the costs and risks of such a company-wide development program be practically eliminated? For example—

1. Since one consequence of these meetings is lower production cost, there is no need to worry about the "high costs [of an education program] in terms of increased facilities, numbers of instructors, time lost, and so forth." [42]

2. There would be no difficulty such as that involved in finding "new and more relevant case and discussion materials." Suitable and up-to-

[42] This and the quotations immediately following are taken from Zaleznik, Christensen, and Roethlisberger, *op. cit.*, p. 427.

date material would continue to be available as long as there was any possibility of improving any method of work in any department.

3. It would not be difficult to decide "who would be doing the 'education' and about what the employees would be 'educated.'" Everyone who takes part in the plan teaches and studies many aspects of productivity.

4. There would certainly be little danger that such a program "would soon degenerate into propaganda and canned sessions."

5. Finally (a point not mentioned by the authors whom we have been quoting), there would be no risk of antagonizing the union. Usually, it has been the union which has urged management to try the Plan. And we have heard of no instance in which a union opposed it.

Opportunities for management development. Among the major advantages of the Scanlon Plan, as a program for developing managerial capacity, is the fact that management representatives—at all organizational levels—are likely to be confronted by new difficulties, all of which can be treated as opportunities to learn.[43]

For instance, "It has been very difficult for foremen to adjust themselves to receiving ideas from their people on how the job ought to be done." Not that foremen are "reluctant about accepting ideas, but they are quite concerned about what their boss might think of them if too many ideas should come from 'rank-and-file workers.' Consequently, there is a tendency to reject many of the ideas that come in at this level during the early stages of the Plan." The situation doesn't change until "top management convinces the supervisors that they are being measured differently than in the past." Now, "the best foreman is the one whose department has the most suggestions . . . because this is a department where people are not afraid to say just how their job might be done easier and better."

Many training directors could testify that formal training classes haven't been notably successful in helping supervisors to make that kind of change in their attitudes and habits.

Participation and a "Liberating"[44] Education—on the Job

We hope this brief description is enough to show why Fred Lesieur has said, of the Scanlon Plan: "It is not a simple formula, nor a gimmick. . . . It is a set of principles or ideals." It's a way to make teamwork become a fact, and not merely a slogan; to "get away from the 'I' concept, and in-

[43] Under the Scanlon Plan, even top management people are open to criticism. To many Managers, this is a new experience. What can they make of it? Joe Scanlon and Fred Lesieur have repeatedly cautioned top executives against adopting the Scanlon Plan unless they are prepared to put all the cards on the table, and feel sure they can stand the gaff.

[44] J. Roby Kidd used this term in his article "Liberal Education for Business Leadership."

stead, go to 'we.' "[45] It "involves a mature relationship . . . treating people like adults and not like children."

Many people in companies that use the Scanlon Plan have agreed that teamwork and participation are its most valuable consequences. In working together by any such system, people can have a genuinely social experience. But this social consequence has usually been a by-product. And the same may be said of the educational benefits.

Must Employee Development Be Only a By-product?

In appraising anything as humanly productive as the Scanlon Plan, one might ask: What if the valuable by-products were to become central aims —for someone—from the outset?

For instance, suppose a training director (preferably with a different title) were to attend Scanlon Plan committee meetings. His role might be that of an observer-reporter. He could take notes. (But they'd be different from the notes that are currently kept as minutes of these meetings.) His method of work might well be case method. (We think the Incident Process would be effective for this purpose.) Two of the special observer's central concerns might be these: to gather case material on a process of "liberating" education (as carried on at and between committee meetings), and to prepare this material for discussion at periodic stock-taking meetings. At these special meetings, achievements and difficulties during several months could be discussed. And the main issues would be: What have we learned? What seems to have been accountable for our success under the Scanlon Plan (for instance, in having "better than 90% of suggestions accepted")? (p. 49) What might be done differently at meetings where members can't agree?

Would such an effort to make the most of the Scanlon Plan, *as an educational program*, interfere with the educational experience that usually has developed as a by-product? In our opinion, it needn't.

Perhaps the first formal extension course branching out from the Scanlon Plan could be for management representatives. (But opportunity to enter some such course sooner or later should be open to all employees.)

Self-instructions for Management Representatives, as Delegates

In such a course, one project might be to work out instructions for the special task of representing top management on production or screening committees.[46] If a first-line supervisor were to draft his own orders, as such

[45] Working by the Scanlon Plan doesn't necessarily weaken the competitive impulse. What it does is to *widen the circle of insiders*. As participants in the Plan, "we, the people" (in a business or industrial enterprise) now work together to improve the competitive position of the organization as a whole.

[46] See Douglas M. McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise*, chap. 3, for an appli-

a delegate, what might he say? Perhaps he would come up with something in the style of E. B. White's instructions for our delegates to the U.N.[47] For example—

> When you sit down at these committee meetings, sit as a management representative if you like. But when you speak, talk like a citizen of the works.
>
> Bear in mind that company policy should make sense at every organizational level. And it should be rooted in common cause. Make sense. Make common cause.
>
> Represent top management by seeing and showing that though the short-term interests of top executives are not identical with those of rank and file workers, the long-term interests of Managers and other employees are indissolubly united. This is one situation, not two.
>
> In thinking and speaking for management, avoid the term "management goals." Concentrate on *goals for the organization*. And never try to give your fellow employees "*a sense* of participation." That's not what workers want.[48] Instead, explore—*with them*—every opportunity for them to participate—*with you*—in working for the enterprise as a whole.
>
> Finally, don't try to meet your responsibilities in personnel relations by "loving thy neighbor." It will only make him nervous. Build strong relations by following the "law of the situation"; by respecting every employee's rights under that law, and expecting everyone to respect your rights—under the same law.
>
> Because we hope to reap a rich harvest, in the fruits of organizational experience, we are prepared to invest in a soil-building program. Any such program takes time. As a delegate, see to it that the time you spend in committee meetings, and that others spend with you, prepares the ground for growth.

TO RECAPITULATE

Probably no supervisors would write their own orders in precisely those words. But in many Scanlon Plan companies, the language of management action has spoken in that tone. And the committee meetings, which are a vital part of the Plan, measure up to Miss Follett's specifications and hopes as "experience meetings." They have proved successful as experiments in practical democracy, because they help to create a situation in which committee members (regardless of status and function) work together as yes-but-men.

In companies that use the Scanlon Plan, *every employee can see the*

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cation of "management by objectives," one which starts by having people draft their own job descriptions.

[47] Those instructions were first published in *The New Yorker*, in 1946. They were later included in *The Wild Flag*, pp. 144–148. If we should offer apologies to E. B. W., for quoting and adapting part of what he said, we hereby do so. (See Appendix II for complete reference.)

[48] This comment is Fred Lesieur's.

connection between what he does and abstractions such as "productive efficiency" and "company profits." And when every employee finds it advantageous to share what he knows, and to put forth his best efforts, the situation is one in which generating power-with people naturally replaces the effort to manipulate or to coerce people.

Whenever people combine their efforts in co-action toward mutually desired goals, they can avoid the kinds of waste and loss which inevitably occur when coercion sets up antagonisms that evoke counteraction. And anyone who feels like a Member can never be wholly isolated—wherever he is, and whatever he does. His life is richer and more rewarding (also more painful at times) than that of anyone whose habits and attitudes are asocial. A Member never lives either for himself or by himself—alone. His responsiveness toward others takes him out of himself. And as he tries to "help other human beings grow to their full stature," he fully accepts "all the responsibility involved in our part in that unfolding life which is making both 'facts' and ourselves."

TO SUM UP

In these ten chapters we have drawn on experience to give our views on the issue: *If anyone wants to become more productive in his relationships with other people, how might he use case method?*

Throughout this text we have raised more questions than we can answer. In wrapping it up, we'll stick to the same system.

When case method has been used by students of social relations, observable results have sometimes seemed small. Yet surely, in a study group *there's no scarcity of opportunity to apply case method,* as a means of learning about what favors productive interaction, and what hinders it. How, then, might one account for the gap between reasonable expectations and observable accomplishments?

Experience in many study groups suggests that not every student who has signed up for a course *on* social relations is enlisted in the aim of becoming more responsive, and more responsible, *in* his relationships with other people. And perhaps those of us who do regard case method as a means to that end have often expected too much, too soon. *Learning-as-changing takes time.* Is it realistic to expect that, within a few weeks, anyone could do more than make a start, perhaps by identifying some of the habits that he might want to change?

But whatever the time span during which case method is used, we question whether it has always been effectively adapted as a means to learn about productive interaction *by direct experience,* as well as from remote cases.

LEARNING BY QUESTIONING

For instance, some of us teachers have failed to make the most of the essential difference between the lecture system and the case method, sometimes by acting on the assumption that our main function is to hand out right answers. By doing so, we have unduly limited opportunities for students to learn how to ask productive questions, and to work independently toward answers that represent their own insight. A *person who is aiming at self-education can't get anywhere by uncritically accepting answers from other people.* And the fruits of case method are sure to be small for anyone who thinks that someone else could tell him what's in a case, as though its meaning were the correct solution to a mathematical problem.

Anyone who wishes to try the experiment of applying case method to "the growing edge" of his understanding is committed to something more productive than merely filling his mind with "inert ideas." His task is to keep his mind open, for new insight, and flexible, to acquire new habits. Self-education—by any method—depends on (1) curiosity and the wish to learn; (2) willingness to examine, and to reexamine, the familiar; (3) ability to turn accepted ideas and assumptions into questions that will be productive for investigation;[1] (4) recognizing what one doesn't know (and perhaps cannot find out); (5) learning where to go for information and help; (6) capacity to tap knowledge, ingenuity, and wisdom *in other minds*; and (7) skill in testing, appraising, and using what one picks up.

Progress in learning by case method can be traced in a student's performance and attitude as a questioner. For instance, during a series of case discussions, how much does he broaden the scope of his inquiry? When, if at all, does he start thinking about what kinds of question seem profitable to ask, in relation to any social situation?

And what does his behavior indicate as to his idea of what case method is for? Does he cite cases to "prove" that his ideas are right? Or do his questions and comments show that he is interested in case method primarily as a means to test ideas, to develop working hypotheses, to find and follow up leads, "carrying on a systematic and protracted inquiry"?

WHAT IS A TEACHER'S JOB?

When a teacher's subject is social relations, and his method is case method, he can help other students get off to a good start by showing "himself in his own true character—that is, as an ignorant man thinking, actively utilizing" what he has got in the way of enthusiasm and experience, ability to ask productive questions, interest in and respect for what other people can contribute. His major responsibilities also include trying to stimulate an experimental attitude in his fellow students, providing a wide range of material for learning, and drawing attention to opportunities for getting current case material.

In such a situation, teaching is partly managing. And, naturally, a teacher-manager is responsible for doing some delegating. Every member of a study group is in a favorable position to learn *if* he does some of the leading (preferably in more than one role) and follows a number of different leaders—instead of spending all his time under one leader—in dis-

[1] Items (2) and (3) above are adapted from the following comment by Nancy E. Goodman: "Essentially it is a willingness to examine the obvious combined with the ability to turn an accepted fact into a question for investigation that characterizes the truly creative personality in any field at any time in history. What is imagination, after all, but a daring rearrangement of things already known?" *Living with Stress*, p. 27.

cussing remote cases. For instance, in leading a case discussion (or in reporting on group performance during a discussion) a student is responsible for directing attention away from the unproductive question: "Who was to blame?" (for what went wrong) and for drawing attention to the more productive inquiry: "What seems to have been accountable?" (not only for mistakes and setbacks, but also for achievements and for harmonious relationships).

The kind of understanding that is needed by students of social relations cannot be taught. But it can be learned. And any teacher who is interested in detecting signs of progress in such learning might consider such questions as these: What evidence is there that each student is getting out of the habit of sitting in judgment on those people in cases? Who shows that he is beginning to recognize that case method can do most for him if he applies it experimentally?

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

It is widely assumed that case method is a way of learning from experience. But perhaps more might be accomplished, along that line, if case students gave more thought to such questions as these: Doesn't everyone learn something by firsthand experience? But *how* does anyone learn from experience? Why is it that most of us learn so little, compared to what we might learn from what we live through? And why do many of us derive such scant benefit from other people's experiences? Could it be that *we think too little* about our own experience, and *feel too little* about what happens *in* other people? Do we assume that there's no need to think about what we "know" (because we were there—"in person")? Are the experiences of other people so far away that they can't speak to our feelings, or influence our judgment?

Attitudes and skills that befit a case student can help anyone to become better fitted for learning from experience—both directly and indirectly.

For instance, in firsthand experience a person can profitably proceed on this hypothesis: We learn by doing. But we are in a position to learn more if we *notice* what we (and others) are doing. We can learn still more if we *clarify, verify, amplify,* and *organize* our firsthand observations, and then *analyze, sleep on,* and *reflect upon* what we have gathered up. As opportunity arises, we can act on our observations. Gradually we can develop some working hypotheses. Such hypotheses can earn their pay by keeping us ready periodically to review and to revise—as necessary—what we think we have learned by experience.

Skills that can be practiced by members of a study group can be useful to anyone who is interested in *learning how to learn indirectly*—from the experiences of other people. For instance, there is constant need for each of

us to project his mind and his powers of appreciation toward the private worlds where other people have their experiences. Case students can practice getting into remote situations, trying to get the feel of them "from the inside outwards." Case students may also learn to recognize that a person who feels relatively detached (about his short-term self-interest) is more free to see and understand what other people are feeling, and what they are trying to do.

But anyone who adopts case method as part of his self-education should be prepared to adapt it to his own needs and resources. He must work out his own answer to the question: How can case method help me *to learn more about what is required for productive interaction, and to do more than I have done heretofore?*

It has been well said that there's no such thing as vicarious experience. Wherever an experience starts—as outward circumstance—if you and I are to get anything from it, we must make something of it, by doing something about it. The most important part of anyone's experience is what he does—inwardly—about what happens to him. *He makes his experience by transmuting outward events into meaning-for-him.* And he can test what he thinks he has learned by putting it into practice.

If this is how experience is achieved, it seems a pity that so many students of social relations use case method only for analyzing remote cases. They could learn more if they were to supplement that kind of case analysis by experimenting with case method as a system for observing and analyzing current situations. One profitable opportunity is presented by the situation of the study group itself. How much can they learn by analyzing that?

Case Method Can Be Used like Trifocals

Case method is a way to focus on events at three degrees of distance. In analyzing case material, each member can think *for* himself—though not wholly *by* himself—about:

1. *His firsthand experience* (past, present, and to come).

2. The *relatively nearby experiences* of his fellow students. (Some of this material is drawn from the past and usually cited in connection with remote cases. Some of it is still in the making.)

3. *Remote experiences.* (These events have usually happened to people who are strangers to the study group.)

EXPERIMENTING WITH CASE METHOD

As soon as students become interested in case method as a means of achieving and enriching their own experience, they can experiment with it as a flexible but systematic way to derive insight from events—wherever

the chain of events started. Among the questions that lend themselves to methodical experimentation are these: What activities and attitudes make it possible for a person *clearly to articulate his own experience*, so that he can "know what it is"? What skills can help a person to appreciate, and to learn from, aspects of human nature that he cannot wholly understand?

With such questions in mind, the *three interrelated features of case method* can be experimented with, as ways to gain experience and to share it. For instance—

Learning by Doing Case Reporting

To study a completed case report can be interesting and instructive. But *practicing the skills* of case reporting can be more educational. As members of a study group continue to work together (helping each other to assemble the materials for adequate case reports), they can address themselves to questions that are profitable to think about. For example: what kinds of information are needed by a participant who wants to make realistic decisions in any social situation? Is it possible to develop a systematic yet flexible method for going after and looking into such facts?

Writing a case report can be educational in a way that is different from assembling the material orally. And one kind of situational report that can be profitable to write, to read, to discuss, and to mull over is the cumulative record that case students can make for each other, to each other, and about each other's performance in the study group.

When the case report is treated functionally, as *reporting*, its relationship to other features of case method becomes clear.

Discussing Cases Can Offer Practice in Handling Language

Discussing a case report can be a stimulating and educational experience whenever (1) people talk about what they understand, and (2) everyone listens for the meaning of what is said, or otherwise expressed. But discussion becomes most fruitful for social relations when the people who are talking—and listening—with each other try to identify and to practice skills of language which can promote productive interaction.

And if students gather material in a variety of situations, they are in a position to make a comparative analysis of language behavior. Profitable lines of inquiry include the following: What ways of using language seem to have been accountable, in remote cases, for achievements and for setbacks, for mutual understanding or for tension between people? Which of these different ways of using language can be observed here and now, in our study group? Do these habits and skills of language seem to have similar consequences here? If not, why not? If so, what about it?

Members of a study group can do practical work in General Semantics by including their own ways with language as part of the case material which

they analyze. And in trying to learn about language behavior as a form of interaction, they may find it useful to ponder certain paradoxes. *We think with words.* We can't think clearly without words. But often words block or bias our thinking. We communicate by exchanging words. But communication can take place without words. And sometimes people manage to understand each other even in spite of spoken or written words. What could be accountable for such apparent contradictions? How can members of a study group help each other to communicate more effectively, with and without words? What self-controls and group controls can be developed in such a work group for the purpose of overcoming impulses "to inattention and indifference, to oversimplification and exaggeration"? *How can students of social relations learn from each other to become more literate—socially?*

Testing a Method of Case Analysis

By doing applied work in semantics, case students can test—in their current experience—part of an analytical method which they can also apply to remote cases. And unless they make this kind of direct application, what they learn by case method can't do much for them.

Analyzing cases can be a fascinating game for anyone who is interested in understanding how and why people behave as they do. But it becomes enlightening for someone only when it begins to throw light on his own experience. Case analysis ceases to be academic as soon as case students start putting into practice ideas which they have derived by thinking about some actual situation. How soon will members of a study group begin using some methodical way to look into a situation in which they are participants?

How Do Typical Factors Operate Here?

The system of case analysis that we apply (and offer to students as a starter) is multiple. It includes the idea that, in addition to *the human factor, space-time relationships* and *techniques* are operative and interactive in every social situation. But not all case students become interested in testing the validity and usefulness of that hypothesis (or any other). For instance, relatively few young students appear to recognize the time factor as a strategic variable for them to work with. And not many people have given evidence of noticing how individual differences (in personality) can determine the consequences of spatial relationships. (For instance, case students have often commented that it is a handicap to sit next to the discussion leader, because it's difficult for him to see you, and this limits your opportunities to speak. How many have noticed that a person with aggressive habits may not be handicapped by sitting where the leader would be unlikely to see him if he did raise his hand?) Who undertakes to gather case

material, during a series of case discussions, on the interactive effects of human nature and various technical devices? For instance, how does performance in a study group illustrate the general idea that any technical procedure affects different people in different ways? How can that idea be squared with the observable phenomenon that certain discussion techniques (such as the "risk technique" and "projective listening") have similar consequences wherever they are accepted and used as group controls?

Taking and Combining Different Angles

Our method of case analysis also includes practices which invite people to get and to fuse different angles of view. But how many students realize what they are doing when they get into a remote case? Who notices what happens, in his mind, when he gets beyond the point of merely *being informed* about a case and begins to *identify himself* with some participant? Having gotten that far, how many students take the trouble to travel around, trying to get *a multiple inside view* of what is at stake there?

Another practical use of case method is adopting the attitude of a case student as a means to get out, with one's mind, from a situation in which one is (or has been) an insider. Some students have made enough progress along that line, even during a short series of meetings, so that they could lead discussion on such a case without betraying their connection with it. Two special opportunities in leading discussion on that kind of case are: (1) helping other people to get a nonpartisan, all-round view of it, and (2) extending one's own range by re-viewing a segment of one's experience in the light of what other people see in it.

Taking an organizational view. Usually case students soon acquire the knack of taking an organizational view when they analyze *remote cases.* Once someone suggests the idea, it's not difficult to recognize—at long distance—that every organizational member is obligated to take account of the long-range plans and broad decisions which have been accepted for the organization as a whole. Students soon learn to ask for organization charts when they are inquiring about any remote case. And they know that what an organizational member can properly say and do is to some extent determined by his position and function (as shown on such a chart). But how many students become interested in making or even in studying *an organization chart which represents the kinds of work that need to be done in a study group?* And who will look, in the current situation of this work group, for case material which might throw light on accepted principles of organization?

Taking a long view, here and now. When the method used in case analysis calls for reflection at the culminating phase of each case discussion, students with any aptitude for broad-gauge thinking can stimulate each

other to learn by taking a long-range view. But how soon—if at all—will students become interested in trying to take a long view of some current situation? When will someone recognize that a principle which seemed fitting in some remote case might fit the needs of "this" case, too?

LEARNING TO TREAT DIFFICULTIES AS CASE MATERIAL

In analyzing some remote case, it may seem obvious that a misunderstanding or a difference of opinion might have been turned to advantage if it had been treated as a possible lead toward better understanding. How soon will case students recognize that this same opportunity exists whenever tension arises in the study group? Who will give evidence that he is trying to use case method as a means of learning how to live with difficulties productively, rather than passively? Will someone show interest in following the lead opened up by the question: *How can we make differences* (in experience, and of opinion) *do something for us?* In how many ways will case students show that they feel responsible, to each other, for what happens during the time when "things that are so"—in the study group—are becoming "what people make them"?

BECOMING CASE-MINDED

What it boils down to is this: How soon and how systematically will students start using case method as a means to step up their capacity to live through events—with other people—alertly, objectively, reflectively, and imaginatively?

As soon as a person gets the knack of seeing and treating *as a case* any situation in which he is immediately involved, then case method has become—for him—far more than mere mental gymnastics. He is now in a position to gather up experience, wherever he goes and whatever he does. He can learn from everything he lives through, by observing, analyzing, conferring with other people, and reflecting on what he has seen and done.

Will It Pay Off?

It would be unrealistic to expect practical people to adopt the disciplines of case method as everyday habits unless they think that doing so is likely to pay off—for them. What does this mean for those of us who believe that case method is a socially valid way to get results that are technically efficient and humanly satisfying? How shall we demonstrate that case method can be a practical system by which to find and check facts, to define issues, and to make decisions that stand up because they not only meet immediate issues but also take into account long-term requirements of any organization as a whole? How can we show that certain attitudes

and practices associated with case method can be useful to everyone who is responsible for making decisions that involve other people?

How Soon Can Case-mindedness Start, and How Long Can It Be Continued?

In some conferences, where case students have been administrators or executives, there has been evidence *even during the first day* that people were trying out practices of case method as possible ways to improve their performance in meeting organizational requirements. But most younger students have seemed rather slow in picking up the general idea that case method can yield practical results *only insofar as it is practiced.*

Anyone who takes up case method as *a way to make decisions, to solve problems, to learn and to teach* with other people may find that he can't drop it. But what of that? Who wants to graduate from the school of experience? Isn't it enough to get hold of some system by which to keep on learning and growing? Anyone who adopts the disciplines and attitudes of case method as a way of living through events has a system for using his mind objectively, for putting his common sense to work, and for developing his social imagination. What's more, by constantly seeking "the law of the situation," and trying to serve as "counsel for the situation," anyone can progressively improve his performance as a Member.

LEARNING ABOUT MEMBERSHIP *IN* MEMBERSHIP

Isn't that a major assignment for every human being? Whether or not we recognize it, all of us "are members one of another." That is why no one can find his voice as a mature human being until he learns to speak for claims that are not his own—except as he makes them so. Once a person is launched on the job of trying to recognize, and to work for, all that is at stake in situations that he lives through, he has entered the school of advanced education in Membership. Now nothing can stop him from learning more and more about how to live productively with other people. Even setbacks, mistakes, and misunderstandings don't have to be all to the bad. He can use them and offer them as case material. If he explores them by asking new questions, perhaps they will yield new answers to old problems.

Yes-But Men Can Work Together, in Coeducation

In a case study group, there is opportunity for every member to function as a yes-but man. Each can learn and can serve the group by thinking for himself and by trying to understand why his associates think (and feel) as they do. He can contribute to the group task *by speaking his own mind,*

and also by learning how to *speak effectively as a representative,* faithfully presenting views which are not wholly his own.

People who have worked with the Scanlon Plan have shown what can be done when organizational members—including rank-and-file union members—work together as yes-but men, freely contributing their experience, their ingenuity, and their effort as they work toward goals of the organization. The Scanlon Plan was designed to accomplish technical and tangible results. But most people who have used it seem to be impressed chiefly with the social and intangible consequences of informed participation. When anyone who has actually experienced the Scanlon Plan starts to tell anyone else about it, he almost invariably stresses the change from passivity or hostility to active participation. Might not this kind of co-action be extended to include further opportunities for "co-education"?

By co-education in this special sense we mean not merely that enrollment could be open to people of both sexes. More important—for employee development—would be that everyone who took part in it should share *responsibility for teaching, as well as for learning.* For example, some of the discussion leaders could be rank-and-file workers. And the management leaders would be expected to show capacity for learning in this school where *experience* would be recognized as the head teacher. The curriculum could center on needs of the organization, both short-term and long-term. Many of the texts could be drawn from the work experience of the pupil-teachers. Joint planning and mutual effort, at every stage in such a program, could give it a liberating power which is lacking in any prepackaged plan for educating *other* people.

The Scanlon Plan, as it has been used, shows what can be done. It also suggests interesting possibilities for organization-wide programs of employee development, *based on experience, fostered by discussions of case material, realized as self-education and shared responsibility for teaching.*

But it's not necessary to work in a business or industrial organization in order to join with other people in trying to learn from experience. Wherever people do things together (in government or social agencies, stores, schools, clubs, families, churches, or anywhere else), they can use case method as a means of helping themselves, and each other, to make the most of opportunities for social experience.

WHAT IS "ALL KNOWLEDGE FOR"?

Reducing our whole thesis to one sentence: When people work together by case method, applying it systematically and experimentally as a means of learning all they can about productive interaction, they can make headway toward "becoming, and helping others to become, more perfectly men."

PART FIVE

MORE CASE REPORTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

As you read the following cases, you may wonder—

Why Weren't These Cases Prepared as Discussion Plans?

They have been prepared in that form. (And they will be published by the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.) But we give them here as case reports for the following reasons:

A discussion plan isn't designed primarily for reading. Making it is part of a leader's preparation for group discussion. And if the second section of a discussion plan (indexed information on the case) is well organized, it can be useful during a fast-paced question-and-answer period. But the many short paragraphs (each with a subheading), which make it easy to check any item of information, break up the text in a way that might well annoy a reader.

Another feature of a standard discussion plan makes an even more serious break in the continuity of the text. Some of the most important information about each case is not included in the main body of the report. Instead, it is prepared in separate attachments (which are duplicated, and distributed for close study when someone asks the appropriate questions). But when a person is getting all his information about a case by *reading*, why should he have to keep hunting for appendix material, instead of finding all the important information where he naturally looks for it—in the main text?

In order to suit the tastes of both casual and serious readers, we have kept the main reports short and added supplementary material in footnotes and a few appendixes. If you wonder whether this additional material is important for you, try skipping all of it until after you have made your short-term decision in each case. Then ask yourself: "In what respects, if at all, do I want to modify my opinion, after studying all the available information?"

Another reason for not presenting these cases as discussion plans is that material given in the third and fourth sections of a standard Plan (for discussing a case by the Incident Process) *isn't part of the situation in which the Incident developed.* That may sound complicated. But it isn't. The third and fourth sections consist mainly of *ideas about the case* on

which the Plan centers. For example, the third section gives an analysis of what is immediately at issue, and contains a diagram showing someone's picture of what was at stake (at the time of the Incident). The fourth section includes information on how the Incident actually was handled by participants and—usually—some notes on what happened afterward in the case situation. Other material in the fourth section, contained in special attachments, gives (1) a written opinion (a decision and reasoning) as to the short-term action called for by the Incident, and (2) a table showing decisions and reasoning by a discussion group.

To put all that material into each of these case reports would considerably lengthen this book. What's worse, it might prevent some readers from thinking for themselves.

So much for the form of these cases. Now for other questions.

Why Aren't These Cases Classified?

We haven't ticketed any of these cases, for example, by calling it a "communication case," or a "policy case," or a "case of organizational difficulties." Each of our cases (like most real situations) has all those angles to it. To suggest that any case illustrates only one kind of opportunity (or difficulty) seems to us an unfortunate oversimplification.

Why Such a Variety of Settings?

This is no accident. Drawing our cases from a wide range of environmental settings is one way in which we try to illustrate the general idea that regardless of *where* people interact (for example, in a hospital, a factory, a university, a textile mill, the office of a literary magazine, or a military depot), many of the same organizational and social requirements need to be met and can be met. (The recurrence of several topics, in the questions at the end of each case, is another way in which we come at the same general idea.)

Why So Many Questions at the End of Each Case?

By offering a wide range of follow-through questions, we invite you to test a hypothesis about case study; namely, that analyzing cases becomes most interesting (and potentially most instructive) if, instead of being cut short (after making decisions for immediate action about a mere Incident), it is extended—*with the purpose of trying to learn from the case as a whole, and as a situation comparable to others.*

What about Disguising Cases?

In most of these cases we follow the accepted practice of disguising all names. But we hope the time is not far off when people will have become so case-minded that they will be glad to release objectively written case

reports without disguise. What's the objection to a disguise? It's this. If the disguise is adequate, even for people who are in the know, it significantly distorts the picture of the situation as it actually was. For this reason, we are grateful that the following cases have been released for publication with little disguise. And we are particularly glad that it is possible to publish one case (A *Critic Criticized*) with no disguise at all.

Do Dates Make a Case Date?

One item of information that we never change in reporting a case is the date which shows the time span of events. However, any case writer who follows this practice lays himself open to the criticism that his cases become demonstrably older every year. By giving no dates, a case writer may hope to suggest that all his cases are right up to the minute. But if he *doesn't place the situation, in time,* isn't he omitting information that serious case students want and need? And if he *displaces a case,* by misinforming people as to when it happened (for instance, by moving the date forward every year or so), isn't he failing to meet standards of integrity in case reporting? Moreover, if his case is adequate in other respects, may not his falsification of the date be detected by students who know the historical background?

Finally, in spite of the disadvantage associated with actual dates, aren't there important advantages in being able to study some cases which admittedly took place years ago? For example, some cases are classics because the issues which burned people up at the time still generate heat. In relation to any such case, isn't it specially worth while to look for integrative solutions? Other cases from the past evidently couldn't have happened today. The issues which divided participants, then, no longer arise. Why not? What environmental changes have made the difference? The effort to identify such changes and to account for them can sharpen and deepen a person's awareness of history—as a force which influences every social situation. In reading the following reports, you might be interested to ask yourself: What features of each case make it a period piece or a typical product of today or of some earlier time?

CASE VI. INSIDE A STUDY GROUP [1]

Introduction

Our purposes in preparing this case have made the following report not only an abbreviated version of the original but also a somewhat different picture. For example:

1. We wanted to draw attention to certain habits and skills of language,

[1] This case is drawn from Irving R. Weschler and Jerome Reisel, *Inside a Sensitivity Training Group.*

as a form of social behavior. For that purpose, we selected a number of passages which illustrate difficulties (within or between members of a study group).

2. We wanted to highlight (*a*) what the students seemed to have been noticing about each other, (*b*) their interpretations of what they perceived, and (*c*) what they appear to have learned about and from each other. For that purpose, we have omitted most of the comments made by the two professors.

We urge you to read the full report. By doing so you will be in a position to get a more complete and accurate picture of the situation presented in this condensed version. In our opinion, one of the most striking features of that situation is the attitude of a teacher who evidently takes an intense interest in learning from mistakes, and who willingly offers his own behavior as case material from which other people, too, might learn.

Background Information

As background for this condensed version, the following material is needed:

Time span of the case: A college semester. February 7–May 22, 1956.

Participating reporters: Twenty-four students [2] (seniors and graduates—eighteen men and six women).

Trainer: Professor Weschler (soon referred to by students—at his invitation—as "Irv").

Clinical observer: Professor Reisel. The clinical observer did not take part in group discussions. But we classify him as a participant in the case situation because of the interviews held between him and Professor Weschler at the close of each session.

Quotations from students are taken from the published *excerpts* of diaries in which, "after each session," they were "requested to record fully . . . their true feelings, opinions, and reactions as to anything that may have affected them during that period." [3]

Notes on Discussion Meetings

* * * * * *

FOURTH MEETING: THE FIRST "CRITICAL EVENT"

TRAINER: . . . The history of every sensitivity training group is highlighted by some "critical events" which eventually give it its unique character and history. . . . The first of these critical events took place when Beverly suc-

[2] Only twenty-three of these are heard from. "Russ" is listed as having been a member. But his diary was not quoted in the original report, nor—as far as we can see—did anyone comment on anything that he said or wrote during the course.

[3] Weschler and Reisel, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

ceeded in cutting off further discussion on the moderator subject by asking for volunteers to serve as recorder, observer, and moderator. Al volunteered to be recorder, while Lew offered to observe the group. The decision was forced quickly, and all three were immediately accused of railroading. Beverly was only too ready to admit the impact that she had helped create.

BEVERLY: My impatience is going to be my ruination. I react so strongly to the things that are being said.... Why do I react so violently???? I often felt complete shame and guilt because I got so heated up.... I am sure I had no business railroading the observer and recorder issue through. It was probably very unorthodox and domineering, but unfortunately, I would do the same thing again, should the situation arise.

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SIXTH MEETING: DUKE LEADS A "WALKOUT"

TRAINER: ... Beverly created the greatest controversy with her suggestion that the group try for complete consensus. For the first time, the notion of a "tyranny of the majority" (control by the many) versus the "tyranny of the minority" (blocking by the few) appeared.

BOB: As soon as Beverly had expressed her desire for consensus, a number of people started throwing questions at her.... No one waited for recognition from the moderator.... Many appeared overtly fed up with what was going on.

TRAINER: ... In the midst of the floundering, another "critical event" took place. Under the active leadership of Duke, seven members walked out....

HANK: ... We spend two whole hours arguing—not discussing— ... how to decide an issue.... When Beverly, the "railroader," raised the point of consensus, she was talked down, mostly by me.... Duke, Ben, and I finally pulled the walkout because we were disgusted and ready for a break.... Later, various members tried to rebuke us for leaving, but since Irv [the trainer] had said it was O.K., I don't care what they think. I wish we could get more concrete problems to work on, but I guess this is not the purpose of the class....

SEVENTH MEETING: "BUG-DOCTOR TEST" AND ORGANIZING SMALL-GROUP PROJECTS

TRAINER: The initial phase of the group's development was rapidly coming to an end. During the first hour, everyone took the *California Psychological Inventory*, part of the test battery designed to assess the impact of sensitivity training.... During the second hour, we proceeded to organize the small-group projects. I listed four acceptable topic areas, all very broadly defined.... The students could form their own groups as they saw fit—as long as each group contained either four or five members.

DUKE: We had our first bug-doctor test today.... Trouble with these tests is the psychology background I have interferes with a true answer.

BOB: Mr. Weschler made a diagram on the blackboard, designating where people interested in a given topic could meet. He then asked whether we

thought that we should allocate ourselves first by a show of hands on each project, to keep the groups equal, or whether we should just go to the designated topic area. It was interesting to see that the consensus compromise was 100 per cent for just going to the area.

LEW: I must say that there was and still is some confusion in my mind as to just what Dr. Weschler wants us to accomplish in our group projects. I guess this will all clear up as we go along.

EIGHTH MEETING: WHY DOESN'T BEN "SAY ANYTHING"?

TRAINER: ... Lew ... asked Ben why he never saw fit to say anything in class.

LEW: Ben stated that he did not feel motivated....

HANK: Some of these guys such as Lew and Al turn my stomach. They all jumped on Ben for not talking. They were reading all kinds of things into his nonparticipation in class.... I feel just like Ben; most of the time the discussions haven't been worth taking part in.... I would have laughed if some of these wise guys had hopped on me.... I wonder if they are just talking to appear to Irv as though they were working. Most of their remarks are just rehash of what someone else has already said.... I don't think we should ever get so personal again because before too long there are liable to be some pretty nasty remarks flying around.

NINTH MEETING: THE CLASS FLOUNDERS; "TO HELL WITH IRV"

DUKE: ... My buddy, Ben, rated [4] the highest. Immediately the pseudopsychiatrists in the class jumped into the act and began studying him. It seems to me you can't even breathe without some idiot investigating why you do it. I am rapidly developing a temper restraint in this group lest I smash a few people in an emotional outburst.

TRAINER: ... After the experiment, which to many may well have been personally too threatening, the group floundered at length.

BEVERLY: I'm afraid my reaction is despair bordering on disgust.... At this stage I question the value of letting the class flounder to the point of frustration which I think we are reaching....

FRANCES: I wish the instructor would step in, clarify what has been going on, and give the group some leads as to why, how, and where we are being blocked....

TRAINER: At one point, while the discussion dealt with "feedback," Don asked me to define the meaning of the term. Before a reply was possible, Red burst out with the comment, "To hell with Irv"—followed first by a stunned silence, then by uproarious laughter....

CLINICAL OBSERVER: This meeting featured the "ritual slaying of the father...."

TENTH MEETING: "WHY DIDN'T I SPEAK UP?"

TRAINER: ... The plight of some of the nonparticipants was clearly highlighted in the discussion.... The highlight of the session was a long and animated exchange between Red and Beverly on the subject of "attacking."

[4] That rating was on a test which consisted in guessing how Beverly, who had been selected by vote as "understood best," had answered a questionnaire.

ART: I want to participate, and I am interested. Usually I talk a great deal, but not here. . . . Why didn't I speak up. . . ?

LARRY: I don't feel I have enough confidence within myself or the class in me so that what I say will be looked upon as important. . . .

BEVERLY: . . . How can I decide when to talk and when to keep quiet? . . .

LEW: I am trying not to talk so much. . . . But it seems that once one starts speaking in the group, it is just as hard to stop as it is to start.

ELEVENTH MEETING: DUKE TAKES THE LEAD

TRAINER: Another slow starting period . . . those who wanted to talk about the trainer role couldn't seem to find the right opening. . . . Out of a clear blue sky, Duke suddenly demanded that the group do something "more practical." Outside of class he had prepared a set of role-evaluation sheets which he was now passing out to the group. This inventory was based on Benne's and Sheats's role analysis,[5] and required the members to list names for each of the roles that were described. . . . Before the group could act, a few members objected to the procedure. . . .

DUKE: Red immediately took on his mightier-than-thou role and questioned my motives. It took all the restraint I had to keep from hitting that Alf Landon in the chops.

MAURICE: I was completely amazed to find someone going out of his way to do something for us. . . .

DICK: . . . Everyone seemed greatly relieved when Duke passed his forms out. . . .

TRAINER: Nondirective counseling was one of the skills that some experimented with during the discussion.

LEW: Today I was trying to encourage a person who does not often participate. I tried indirect counseling. . . . It was extremely interesting to see that these methods that Irv talked about actually do work.

CLINICAL OBSERVER: . . . In opposing the resolution of the trainer problem, Duke in turn becomes a problem, not only to the group and to himself, but to the trainer as well. . . . He is extremely influential in the sense that he keeps the group on primitive levels. . . .

TWELFTH MEETING: "IRV'S ROLE" AND OTHER ROLES

DUKE: Well, I just about walked out. Irv's role again. Some people just have sawdust for brains. I don't know what Irv is trying to do, but from appearances I think he tends to be a self-centered egotist! . . . We finally got off the trainer-role bender. . . . Through railroad tactics some of the role-sheet supporters got the group to use them and tabulate the results. . . . Some people thanked me for [preparing the role sheets], while others, which I overheard, were condemning it. Of course they stopped talking about me when I appeared—the two-faced bastards. . . .

MAX: Of twenty-five possible roles listed I made almost half—an even dozen to be exact. . . . When I think of these roles, I have to ask myself, am I really that negative? . . . I am unable to arrive at an unbiased answer, but I have decided to try an experiment during the next two meetings. I am going to try not to "toe-step." It will be tough, but I'll try.

[5] Kenneth D. Benne and Paul Sheats, "Spotlight on Member Roles."

LEW: I noticed that many people put me down as "blocker," "irritant," and "aggressor". . . . Some people saw me as "idea innovator," "supporter," or "acceptor". . . . I do believe that I have contributed somewhat to the group process. . . . [But] I do wish I knew how to shut up. Well, at least I am motivated.

BEVERLY: No one was singled out as being the cause of the group's ills, as I was afraid might happen. . . .

CLINICAL OBSERVER: . . . Now the group is mad at Duke and so they turn on the trainer. . . .

THIRTEENTH MEETING: THE MOST SIGNIFICANT "CRITICAL EVENT"

TRAINER: This was to become the group's most satisfying meeting to date. It started, in a low key, with a somewhat academic discussion . . . of leadership. . . . During the discussion there was obviously better communication —we were carefully listening to each other, and the attacks on persons and the display of negative attitudes were conspicuously missing. . . .

MAX: I went into class today with one aim—to prove what type of person I really am. I had come to the conclusion that a change was needed. . . . So this was a new Max who walked into the room. . . .

TRAINER: After the break, I assumed what many saw as a "forceful and dynamic" role in trying to sum up where I felt we stood as a group. . . . One of my comments produced what, in my opinion, was to turn out to be the most significant "critical event" in this group's history. I pointed out that one of our problems was a "block within a block," composed of Duke, Hank, and Ben, who either through active or passive resistance seemed to be blocking the group from making genuine progress. I tried to be as noncritical as possible, wishing merely to point out a key problem so that the group could deal with it. . . . Right or wrong, the observation caused a tremendous storm. . . . The reactions of the three "blockers" were startling. . . .

DUKE: When Irv suddenly had Hank, Ben, and me placed in a category of a "block within a block," I was amazed. . . . Hank gave very blunt answers to the class, which made me very happy. . . . Ben screwed up the works by hemming and hawing about something. I wish he would get some self-confidence. . . . The general idea is that we present a problem. I didn't know we even fitted into some people's narrow thoughts, but discovered that people notice our seating habits. Now at last the group has something controversial to chew up, and I hope they continue their attacks so I, too, can get in a few licks.

HANK: During the break Irv asked me what it would take to get me into the class. . . . I told him I could see no point in the discussion and therefore didn't have enough interest to do much participating. . . . After the hour started, Irv forcefully brought out the idea of hidden agenda again. Before I knew it I was telling the class how I felt about it. . . . Soon I was being questioned from all sides. I really enjoyed this hour. . . . There was at last something real and concrete to get my teeth into. . . . I didn't realize that our little group had such an impact on the class, but I will admit that

maybe we do owe it to the group to bring out how we feel.... Maybe something can be done about it still to rectify either the class or else my attitudes toward the class. I will have to try to do something more, but I can't enter into a discussion if there is no point to it....

BEN: When Irv mentioned that Duke, Hank and I were sitting together, forming a block which had influence on the class, it was something I had not known or been aware of before. Hank . . . said he had no use for the class, that nothing was being done or accomplished. This really started something. He was asked if the same applied for Duke and myself. We answered with a loud "yes".... I am glad this was finally brought into the open for everyone to see.... I believe from now on there will be more understanding among the group members, and I hope we won't swing back into the same rut again.... I'll try to do my part to see that we don't.

MARIE: I was so against it all that I couldn't enter into the discussion. I was afraid there could be no other result than to increase the hostility of the fellows and to make matters worse....

TRAINER: By labeling the three "blockers" as a clique, I may have made it more difficult for them to act as individuals at future meetings.

BOB: I personally don't feel the three are a block because they don't participate; they probably have not as yet found enough stimulation to enter the group. . . . All three impressed the fact upon the group that they were speaking for themselves. I believe . . . they definitely want to be thought of as individuals.

MAURICE: . . . We again continued in our Mr. District Attorney role of making Ben, Duke and Hank more a part of the class.... Why not try to understand them instead of directly attacking them?

CLINICAL OBSERVER: . . . It became apparent about this time that despite his conscious efforts to be nondirective, the trainer had in fact been just the opposite.... To complicate the situation further, a hostile, competitive situation had developed between the trainer and Duke. This, too, could not be bypassed.... Having decided upon action of some sort, the trainer manages a startling coup. In one motion he becomes both directive and supportive, and at the same time shows his strength by taking on not only Duke, but two additional members of the group, whom he identifies as a "block within a block".... The group is both awe-struck and satisfied! . . . Members for the most part are relieved to find that the trainer has a point of view and is willing to stand up for it....

FOURTEENTH MEETING: "CHRISTMAS IN MARCH?"

TRAINER: Christmas in March, goodwill toward man, friendliness toward all! In a genuine climate of permissiveness, almost everyone who wanted to talk seemed able to get in.... Some who hadn't been heard from for many a meeting took part today....

DUKE: Well, today we really had a surprise. The girls brought coffee and doughnuts for the group. This proved to be a boon for mixing. It gave me faith in the group again.

BEVERLY: We are really coming as a group.... I think I'm helping the atmos-

phere to become better. I have become a real listener.... The Rogerian (nondirective) technique is working, though every time I see it, I am just as amazed and impressed as I was the first time around.

PETE: Today Dick and Bob opened the door for me to have a say.... This made me want to hear everything everyone else had to say...

RED: It's strange to experience the camaraderie—this sort of "oh-well-we're-all-in-this-together" feeling. It has resulted in my being able to accept more readily other points of view and ideas, even though they may be antagonistic to my own....

LARRY: Today I finally expressed my true feelings—how I felt with regard to my position in the class. I guess Pete provided the stimulus for me. It really wasn't easy.... I hope I shall find the security I am looking for, the feeling that what I have to say is of importance and will be accepted by the rest of the group.

LEW: ...The only point that seemed to stymie us was getting the Hank block of nonspeakers into the group....

ART: When I asked Hank...what he would like to see done, his reply was, "something concrete—something you can get your teeth into and not this dribble which has been going on." He mentioned a discussion of fraternities.... To me the exposition of fraternities was utterly wasteful and definitely away from the purpose of our discussion. When I commented on this, Red became annoyed and snapped at me.... What shall we do? Right now my attitude is, to hell with them. This I realize is bad, but I dislike being jumped at when I am trying to solve a group problem.

HANK: ...These nebulous questions...do not raise any interest in me.... I am sure I am missing the purpose of the class somehow or other, but I don't think it's because I have a closed mind on the subject.... I wonder what Irv's idea is in aligning the "Unholy Three" against the rest of the group. Are we really a problem to him, or are we just something that the class can talk about?

DON: ...We are picking on Ben, Hank, and Duke. To a point we have made it almost impossible for them to enter our group effectively.

FRED: Putting these three fellows on the spot is not the way to get them into the group. We are merely severing them further....

TRAINER: My original reference to the "block within a block" has created stereotypic thinking which now has become difficult to break down. The label sticks, and Ben especially has trouble getting out from under its corrosive cover.

BEN: It seems that every time Hank gives his negative views, the class thinks he is talking for Duke and myself, but it isn't true.

TRAINER: Toward the end of the meeting the discussion became even more hostile.... During one rapid-fire exchange, one of the girls was thrown off balance by a forceful, unfriendly line of questioning....

ROBIN: I was so totally unprepared for all this being directed at me.... I am not sorry it happened, but usually I acquit myself with more agility than today.... It took a jolt to make me realize that I am as vulnerable to attack as anyone else.

CLINICAL OBSERVER: . . . Paradoxically, the directive behavior of the trainer actually opens the way for close interpersonal relationships. . . . Unfortunately, the soothing effect of mother's milk is only temporary. . . . If coffee and doughnuts could make a lasting peace, the Gray Ladies of the world long since would have displaced the diplomats at the conference tables of the world.

SIXTEENTH MEETING: "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH RED?"

TRAINER: At the beginning of the period, I returned the results of the quiz. Beverly and Ben, a member of the "block within a block," received the highest grades.

BEVERLY: There goes Ben—highest grade in the test. Once again his abilities and insight come to the fore. I think it's just too bad we can't help him express himself. . . .

RED: Irv—was I shook today! That test! I have to admit I was figuring on being top dog, but to be beaten by a woman—that was too much!

DUKE: We got the quiz back today—and it looks like any other. He who parrots best gets the highest grade. . . . What phoniness!

TRAINER: This was the day on which we started work on the big *grading problem*. . . . [The students had been asked] to arrive at criteria as well as weights for the various components making up the final grade. . . . A total of four hours, to be spread over a number of meetings, was allotted to this task. . . . The initial discussion fell flat on its face. . . .

BILL: Today many of us were operating very poorly—on two cylinders instead of eight. There were definite cliques operating, with people joining one clique or the other in order to satisfy their own selfish goals.

DICK: What are we going to do with Red? And others like him? . . . . Why should the group become bogged down because of one person? Here is one individual whose opinions are contrary to those of twenty-three others. Is his feeling that important? . . . I feel strongly that when there is only one member on the other side of the fence, it is up to him to try to make the move. If he doesn't, then he stands as the single blocker—he hinders progress!

TRAINER: Should the group prove unable to reach a workable consensus, the grading problem was to revert back to me for final decision. . . . Before the end of the meeting, a number of attempts were made to get the group to evaluate its progress. I offered some of my own observations. . . . Once again I more or less inadvertently focused on the "big three" by pointing out that their sitting together and whispering to each other might be disturbing to the group. . . .

DUKE: . . . After much of nothing, Irv closed the meeting with some of his "sage" advice. I am sick of it!!!

MARIE: When Irv accused me after class of sitting there and not helping the group, I knew he was right. . . .

RED: I don't know if Irv was aiming his comments at any particular people, but they certainly hit home with me. For example, when he talked about

people letting the class down because of delusions of grandeur, I felt he was referring directly to me.

FRED: I personally never noticed Duke, Ben, and Hank sitting in a group until Irv mentioned it.... I honestly believe that a person is looked at with a double eye if he is pointed out by Irv in this class.... Their presence may have had some negative influence on us, but I feel the problem was doubled when they were pointed out. They were pressured, labeled, and ridiculed ...all to make them talk. Maybe this is why they later moved—to find out what the hell was going on.

BOB: I think Irv has brought definite pressure to bear on these three people. ...The three became rather indignant at...being questioned as to why they were sitting together. As Duke stated, "It's none of your damn business."

CLINICAL OBSERVER: ...The "grading problem" set before the group was a big order. The time limits and consensus proviso insisted on by the trainer caused an immediate build-up of tension.... In the course of this session the issue of the clique arose once more. It was to come up again and again....

SEVENTEENTH MEETING: "D–DAY"

DUKE: Today was D-day—meaning disperse. We split up to see if the "preachers" in the class would be happy. I asked if it made any difference to them. ...They got onto Hank again, and he came through with flying colors. ...He said he would not conform. I agree with him 100 per cent. If we are going to be mentioned as a block, I wish they would leave Ben out. ...He doesn't say anything, just sits and gets embarrassed. Irv helped our strength with some more remarks at the end of the class. Tyranny of the minority!! Ha!Ha!

TRAINER: As the gulf between the "big three" and the majority of the class widened, prospects for reaching full consensus on the grading problem became dimmer and dimmer. Duke especially had begun to taste the power which his nonconforming behavior wielded over the group, and he relished the attention which was focused on him and his cohorts....

DICK: I think the blame for this mess rests with the group. If we hadn't made such a fuss about Ben, Hank, and Duke, things would not be as they are now.... The "silent three" were put under pressure and resented it. They rebelled. A simple problem in the early stages of our group development has turned out to be quite a large problem by now.

PETE: Beverly said she was scared to death of the big three.... She especially didn't appreciate their talking among themselves while she was trying to get a point across to the group. It's funny, but to me these three offer no threat.... In fact, Beverly and several of the other high-powered talkers give me more fear.... When they (Duke, Hank, and Ben) split around the room, they first monopolized the group by cross-conversations strictly between themselves....

ART: Perhaps the best thing that happened today was the separation of Hank, Ben, and Duke. This to me represents a definite improvement in our group.

All of them, but especially Duke, entered into our conversation.... I was very pleased with their action....

LARRY: Frankly, I am getting fed up with the entire situation.... For weeks everyone sat around and asked why certain individuals weren't participating. ... Frankly, I don't care one bit whether Ben, Hank, and Duke sit at all, and neither do they, I think. It seems we have put sufficient time on them. What about us—myself, Pete, and Art—don't we count? ...

TRAINER: ... During a discussion of some of the "hidden agenda," I ... indicated that I felt some of our people who had eight cylinders were operating on only two to four.... The analogy was readily picked up; Mike was especially singled out as one individual who had been sitting back too much....

FRANCES: I felt the accusations against Mike were unjust ... if silence alone is an indication of nonfunctioning. I could name at least half a dozen others, myself included, who were possibly less active verbally and mentally than Mike....

MAX: When it was said that we are all using defenses, it hit right home with me.... It is so much easier to see someone else than yourself.... When I walked out of class today, I said to myself—who do you think you are—Herb Shriner? It seems that every time I get the opportunity, I try to make them laugh.

CLINICAL OBSERVER: ... It was noticed that the "clique" members were now sitting separate from one another. Duke could hardly wait to bring this to the attention of the group. It was obviously a peace offering to the group and to the trainer.... Unaware of the real implications of the clique's split, Duke announces that it was preplanned. This affords the group an opportunity to descend en masse. The clique is perceived as physically split up but psychologically still intact.

The new attacks goad the clique into a morose unanimity. They now have a central value about which to rally—nonconformity.... They voice their contempt of the group and the training process by labeling it phony, weak, and unreal. They claim to remain in the group only because it is too late to get out. Besides, they need the grade....

EIGHTEENTH MEETING: "TIME IS REALLY RUNNING OUT"

TRAINER: ... The full two hours were spent on criteria for grading and the percentages to be assigned to each performance to be graded.

BEVERLY: None of us knew what to do with Duke, so we bogged down. I wonder if he really is a tyrant or if I am seeing him this way because I want it to be that way.... Poor old Duke ... I really feel for him! ... I think of the understanding it will take to help him get settled in a job, and I worry about the strife this kid is going to have....

DUKE: These people are *all* afraid to try something new—just as I told them. ... We will undoubtedly end up with a parrot final, but not if I have anything to do about it. It seems I am becoming a real blocker. I don't think so. The weak ones said they would compromise, which made my opinion all the firmer. I'll "block" them to the very end!

HANK: Well, time is really running out on us.... As far as I can see, this group well never have 100 per cent consensus on anything—not even the time of day.

BEN: Today, one hour and fifty minutes were spent haggling.... We only have one more hour left for discussion. From the way things have been going, I know the whole thing will be a big flop and wind up in Irv's hands.

NINETEENTH MEETING: RED "BLEW HIS CORK"

DICK: If we had tackled the grading problem today, we would not have made it....

TRAINER: After sidetracking the grading problem, we again focused on the "hidden agenda," on fears and defenses which we use to protect ourselves —sometimes against the impact of training.

DOROTHY: ... I enjoyed our discussion of "fear" and was surprised—no, that was not the right word—disappointed that more of us weren't interested or did not feel involved.

DICK: I was of the opinion that it was not the responsibility of the group to draw in these nonparticipants.... After seeing what happened today I am not sure that this is true.

RED: At first, when this class started, I thought I would put out a good deal of effort and be satisfied with any grade.... As of now, I feel the hell with it! ...

TRAINER: When Red could stand it no longer, he literally "blew his cork." He attacked the class as a "bunch of hypocrites," and accused members of not saying what they meant when they put their inner thoughts into their diaries.

BOB: I knew this was going to happen because our small-project group discussed withholding personal feelings with Irv when we met with him last Tuesday afternoon....

HANK: Red finally took off this morning, telling us ... that the class stunk. I thought to myself—here was a fellow who finally was saying what he felt —this could lead to some good! ...

BEVERLY: Today we had a real good session. Many things were brought into the open which needed to be said, *and* we accepted them and worked with them....

LEW: This was the most disgusting meeting we ever had! ... We have in our midst a few with very negative attitudes.... I personally am so disgusted I don't know what to do....

CLINICAL OBSERVER: ... Red's blowup emphasized the feeling of schism in the group. Underneath it all is the perpetual and crucial problem that members of all groups must face: is membership in the group inhibiting the aims of the individual? ...

TWENTIETH MEETING: WILL THIS TRAIN "HEAD FOR DERAILMENT"?

TRAINER: For a number of sessions the storm had been brewing.... Numerous unresolved issues were affecting the group, whether people wanted to admit it or not....

At the beginning of the meeting, I used a tape recorder to play back a portion of the last session and tried to summarize the complaints made by group members, as I heard them....

BEN: The usual feeble attempts to try to come to grips with these problems met with no success.... Very little enthusiasm was shown, and only a few participated.

RED: We are really suffering these days. Throughout practically the whole meeting, my feelings, opinions, etc. were all negative.... I couldn't see any particular point in participating and I didn't.... Something in the way of realization is beginning to creep up on me.... I thought a person could shut himself off from the rest of the class, after having been fairly active, much as I was.... Obviously I was wrong.... Apparently the only real way to get something out of this is to get involved to the extent that you work up a set of ulcers.... Then what happens to your other classes?

ART: Today I formed some reactions. If I listed my gripes about certain members of this group, I would fill volumes....[6]

TRAINER: ...Robin suggested that the group have a party at her house, sometime in the near future. This suggestion was received with mixed emotions. ...The party discussion was followed by the "long break"—twenty-two minutes, as someone timed it.... When we finally reassembled, we nostalgically observed how nice it was to get together in little groups and just talk. This was kicked around for a while, but really not much else was happening.

Once again I felt the urge to "insert the needle".... I subconsciously didn't rely on [my belief] that a group is strong enough to work out its own destiny.... I hinted darkly that unless some of the blockers were dealt with, this "train would surely head for derailment".... Max, then Duke and Lew, demanded to know whom I had in mind as "blockers." ...

HANK: Today we asked Irv to back up some of the vague statements he keeps making about mysterious problems we are evading and elusive persons who are "blockers." He refused to answer.... I really felt boiling about this, although I think it is a waste of time to get worked up....

DUKE: My sentiment for the whole day is crap! ... Irv ... mentioned "blockers" again, and I got the feeling it was us, Hank and I, whom he was talking about.... By now I am almost positive Irv is down on Hank and me.

BEVERLY: What we did to Irv today shouldn't happen to the grubbiest worm. I think it was good that he didn't show how strongly he really felt about things.... Duke did not want to know for any constructive reason if he was a "blocker." ...

CLINICAL OBSERVER: This session had a retrogressive quality. Tension-provoking issues, which had lain dormant, burst to the surface again.... The situation is extremely difficult....

TWENTY-FIRST MEETING: "TODAY WAS *THE* CROWNING DAY, BUT ..."

TRAINER: General nervousness and restlessness characterized the opening minutes. No one wanted to "face the music." The silence appeared so embar-

[6] He then gripes about five people, none of whom is a member of the "bloc."

rassing that Robin felt the need to break in with, "Well, good morning everybody," and Maurice tried to relieve the tension by offering "to sell tickets to the party."

MARIE: I felt pretty scared, too, but was determined to see if we could get back where we left off last meeting. I asked the group if they would like Irv to play back the tape of the end of our last session.... Again silence reigned.... Then Beverly gathered her courage, leaped in, and launched us on a discussion of how others affected us.

LEW: ... We finally got down to naming names.... I wonder why it took so long.... I believe we will rapidly progress in our last few meetings—but there are so few meetings left now.

LARRY: Today was *the* crowning day. I finally made my contribution, which is something I've been waiting to do for eleven weeks.... I really feel most of the credit goes to Beverly, who gave me the support I needed....

DICK: For the first time I noticed Pete today. When he spoke he had something valuable to say, and the class seemed to be very interested.... His remarks impressed the group so much that now—when he is going to speak—the group will surely take notice. The same thing happened to Larry and Hank. Maybe this will come to some good. I think it will.

MARIE: We talk about permissiveness and acceptance.... I have read about it, have heard of it, have believed in it; but it is an entirely different story when you personally experience it.... It was wonderful.... I felt I was more effective than at any other time....

TRAINER: ... It was impressive to see how many members of the group were truly aware of each other and sensed the processes going on in the group as a whole. Beverly was largely responsible for providing support and directing the group.... Her efforts appeared primarily group-oriented. What a difference between her behavior now and that during the "railroading" episode, many a meeting ago!

BEVERLY: If we clocked the minutes I talked today in relation to my mathematical share, I should go into a shell for two weeks!! ... I thought I controlled the group for almost the entire two hours, but I don't think it was too bad, or they wouldn't have kept on the track for so long.... I was really pleased with my participation....

MARIE: I think Irv did a terrific job today.... I'm sure that his comment, "I listened to the tape in my office and must say I'm not very pleased with what I said or the way I used the term 'blockers,'" had a very good effect on many people. We were again able to see Irv as a human being, with feelings, and to realize that he has more interest in the group than just being the instructor.

LEW: Irv finally came through—as if he knew what he was doing! His comments and encouragement were spontaneous (for the first time this semester)....

BEVERLY: ... Today [Irv] entered the group and really helped us. I think the kids accepted him better for it.

TRAINER: For the first time in weeks, the group carried through without taking a break. As usual, our concern focused on the "big three."

MARIE: Our situation with Hank and Duke is more serious than I was able to comprehend before today's meeting. . . . Duke said after class, "We can do anything we want to this group, and you can't do a thing about it. . . ." At the end, Lew asked Hank if he felt he had made progress, and Hank answered "no." Then he laughed and turned to Duke. I wondered why he laughed and asked him. Before he could speak, Duke answered for him. "Can't you see—he can't say anything else—if he did your whole world would collapse." I think what Duke meant to say was that Hank's whole world would collapse—including Duke's. . . . Mike seemed to be aware of this when he told Hank, "Whatever you do—don't lose the protection of your castle."

TRAINER: By now, both Duke and Hank seemed trapped, partly by their own machinations, and partly by the role which the group had assigned to them. . . .

DUKE: I am getting frustrated more and more. . . . I find I have several roles to play. I want to help the class, but I also feel I have to defend my friends when they are attacked. Things aren't helped when Hank blurts out his disgust with the group. I guess I will have to stick by Hank and give up on the class. . . . In my opinion Irv doesn't foster people who are individualists. . . . I think we, Hank and I, have the group where we want them. . . . Everybody bitched about long breaks, so today we didn't have one. . . . I bet if Hank and I had gotten up, the class would have followed. What a bunch of sheep!

HANK: Today I told the class what I really thought of them. . . . Irv was very astute in his observation of me. I do like to be in the limelight. . . . There are many things going on that I believe to be worth while and interesting. I have, however, assumed the role of the disinterested [sic], disgruntled student, and I will be stuck with it for the rest of the semester. I shall have to tell the class the things that they have come to expect to hear from me. . . . I would like to know if Irv feels I am a blocker, or if he is aware that I am overplaying the role I have taken up. At first, the role was not a conscious one, but of late I am working at appearing to be disinterested [sic]. If I didn't like the class somewhat, I would miss many more sessions than I have.

BEN: Today Marie told us how uneasy she feels when Duke makes side remarks to either Hank or me while she is speaking. She thinks that we are talking about her. . . . Hank gave out with his usual negative attitude of utter disgust; . . . It was brought out that this might be his way of attracting attention to himself, but I don't go along with this. . . . I noticed we didn't take a break today, and no one called for one. What does this mean?

CLINICAL OBSERVER: By this time, it was apparent that this was not to be a "happy-ending" group. . . . The divergence of private interests would not permit smooth and satisfying resolutions. . . .

Despite waves of dissatisfaction that tended to overrun the group, honesty and integrity were nonetheless visible as individual members tried to face up to the sources of the conflict. The fact that the group did not take a break reflects the intensity of their need to cope with one another. . . .

Like many of the recent sessions, this meeting had moments both of warmth and of anger. At this stage, the members were much like a large scrappy family, often engaged in violent civil war, but quick to unite in the face of any threat from the outside. . . .

The clique became a symptom of the group's differences rather than their cause. As far as the "big three" were concerned, the fires of hell couldn't rend them asunder. Visibly upset and disgruntled, this subgroup had a unique individuality which gained it a great deal of gratifying attention. Were it not for Duke, the remaining members of the clique might have suffered the fate of anonymity. Now their union gave them notoriety.

TWENTY-SECOND MEETING: "HANK CAME THROUGH," BUT "IRV DIED IN THE FIRST HOUR"

TRAINER: What an amazing surprise! Hank, perhaps the group's most negative member, passed out cigars and candy after becoming the father of a baby boy. A greater peace offering seemed hardly possible.

BOB: For the first time, Hank really thought of our group. . . . When people offered him their sincere congratulations, I believe he felt the group had a personal interest in him rather than in "Hank, the blocker," as I believe he had been classified.

BEVERLY: Hank came through today—as he has not all semester. . . . Duke, too, was a good influence today. He had a point, and he made it well. . . .

TRAINER: The discussion continued . . . with a searching analysis of feelings. Duke noted that by labeling certain people, we fixed them deeper into their role. . . .

MAX: As I sat and listened, I thought to myself what fools some of these people are! I mean, why do they continue to put people into pigeonholes? If I tell a person that he is a "blocker," even if he isn't, after a while he will begin to believe it and assume the role which has been created for him.

MARIE: Today Hank felt free to say that he had enjoyed and gained a lot from our last meetings. This is surely an important step for him. . . . He really thinks more of the group than he lets on. After all, he passed out the cigars and candy in our class rather than in another of his classes. . . .

LEW: . . . Yes! Hank *does* care about the class. I am beginning to see Duke's point now. He said that Hank acts like he does because people expect it of him. . . . Today Irv died in the first hour. . . . In the second period, Irv gave it the old college try, and he was fairly effective.

ART: Today we had a permissive atmosphere in our group, but . . . I am not motivated to join in; maybe it's working with intangibles all the time. . . . I am interested, but I don't know quite what to say, where to go, or what to do. . . . This in particular is a new experience for me as I have always been an active member in every other group I have ever belonged to.

RED: This class has the damnedest capacity to put me in a bad mood. . . . I just don't feel like putting any effort into it any more. . . . Actually, the reason I am having so much trouble may be because I would be admitting my own shortcomings in not being able to help. . . .

LEW: It was most interesting to hear Red say he didn't like Beverly to get the

upper hand in class. I believe what he means is that he wouldn't like anyone to get ahead of him in the struggle for leadership. . . .

BEVERLY: Red said he hated to work under a woman. He also mentioned that I controlled the class. . . . Red tried to soften his comments, but I believe his choice of the word "control" was significant. . . .

CLINICAL OBSERVER: Hank's distribution of cigars and Red's statement of his feelings about women were the key events of this session. These occurrences were interrelated.

Hank's gesture was telling because it forced a reorganization of the way in which Hank was perceived by the members of the group. . . . The collapsing of the Hank stereotype was loud enough to be heard. . . .

Red, however, was rubbed the wrong way. . . . Turning on the women, he created a new clique, and vigorously attacked them. In doing so, he broached still another area of conflict within the group. . . .

TWENTY-THIRD MEETING: "DON FINALLY GOT DESPERATE"

TRAINER: . . . Toward the end of the first period, Don indicated that he "had had enough" and "preached" to the group about their misguided behavior. . . .

DICK: When Don finally got desperate and brought the group to order, I felt greatly relieved.

BEN: Don tried to make us feel like bums. . . . After his outburst, the atmosphere got so thick you could cut it with a knife.

DUKE: . . . I told the group about Irv. I pointed out his power. But I can't fight City Hall by myself. . . . Right now, I might be killing my grade, but I will keep speaking until someone shuts me up.

ART: Irv has a role in this class. To some people he is a force which they can't fight. Although he doesn't act wrong, his very presence is bad for some members.

BEN: When Duke brought up his very good point about Irv's authority and power, Maurice tried to tell us that he wasn't aware of it, that it really didn't bother him. . . . I believe anyone who can say this about Irv's power, or that of any instructor for that matter, is a liar!

DON: Duke had a field day in trying to make himself look important. He made some good statements. . . . One was that he did his blocking as a jest. . . . I doubt that he will get by with it again. Red called him a "nasty so-and-so," and I was in full concurrence.

HANK: I wish the class knew how much I like the group at times. . . . I think Irv can see how I feel. . . .

TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING: WILL DUKE BE "SATISFIED"?

TRAINER: . . . The first hour was taken up with an examination, while during the second hour we spent some time on the grading problem and some time looking at the process.

BEVERLY: . . . Irv softened his ways, first by allowing us to choose our questions

and, second, by having us code our papers. Life is pretty tough when one has to go to such lengths to prove (attempt to prove) one has honorable intentions. Still I think it helped.

DON: Duke is afraid that Irv will grade him down. But on this exam there were no names, and perhaps Duke was satisfied.

DUKE: This was one of the best tests I have ever taken. . . . Still, I didn't like the phony bit of assigning numbers to the papers because I think Irv will still be able to tell who wrote them.

RED: Whew—I must confess something! I had absolutely no motivation for studying for the test. My morale is shot. I couldn't see going through the work that would be necessary just to get a lousy B. . . . I was actually considering dropping this course in order to concentrate on other courses where I stand a much better chance. I was within a whisker of dropping, to tell the truth. . . . It's a crime I'm so worried about grades.

CLINICAL OBSERVER: The major feature of the twenty-fifth session was the trainer's effort to prove that he was a person of good will. . . .

TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING: "STEAMROLLER TACTICS," "A WALKOUT," AND "NAME CALLING"

TRAINER: Returning the examination papers, I indicated considerable satisfaction with the results and mentioned that if we could put into practice what we seemed to know intellectually, we would have a most exceptional group. There were three A papers—Beverly, Red, and Maurice.

JEAN: I wonder if Irv is not contributing to antagonism toward Beverly by publicly announcing that she again made an A. . . . I would like to know her better, but I feel that many members in the group are strongly against her.

DUKE: We got our quiz back today and I got a C. What disillusionment! Irv asked our opinion and we got graded down for it. Am I really mixed up? Ben and Hank got high grades. I am now resigned to a C in the class and will just have to forget Law School. Such injustice!

TRAINER: . . . There were thirty minutes left [for the group to reach a decision on the grading problem].

ART: To me it was evident that if we were to get things done, we would have to "steamroller" the whole thing through. . . . For me it would have meant complete defeat if the problem had to go back to Irv. . . . I am glad it was Max who got up because he is strong. . . . Two people [Bill and Red] walked out, although I think it was for show only. . . . In the end Max naturally got condemned, but anyone would have been who had been up there. . . .

TRAINER: To most people's surprise, Max walked up to the board, and with the help of a few confederates, literally propelled the group toward a solution.

MAX: Assuming the role of authoritarian today, I was instrumental in getting the grading problem solved in twenty-nine minutes . . . with the help and support of Mike, Bob, Duke, and Art we pushed through the following standards: . . . .

LEW: Today Max pushed the grading problem through. I supported him throughout by voicing agreement. Many, including Irv, did not like the way we reached consensus, but to me at least, it was important to get the job done. . . . I say, to hell with anybody who gets in the way. I know this is not what the course teaches, but if you are going to succeed in business, you must produce! . . .

BEN: At certain times it seemed as if everyone was trying to get his ideas through at the same time. Bill was cut down at least three different times when he tried to speak. So was Maurice. After a while there were only a few who really tried to get the thing done, with the others sitting back and not caring. . . . If there were any negative attitudes, the members were either too scared to say anything or just didn't give a damn. . . . For Red, everything is "hurrah for me" and "the hell with you." What a phony!

TRAINER: During the discussion, as more and more objections were bypassed and people got almost physically suppressed, Bill and Red got up and left the room. . . .

DON: Why these guys walked out was not obvious at the time. True—they did appear dissatisfied with something, but what it was I didn't know. For a while they disturbed me greatly by talking to each other; they thus failed to contribute to the general good of the group.

AL: I felt somewhat guilty when Bill and Red left the room because I hadn't opened my mouth throughout the whole meeting. . . . I rather hoped the group would fail and that grading would revert back to Irv.

DOROTHY: . . . My first reaction to the walkers was, "How infantile can you get?" . . .

FRED: Bill and Red probably walked out because they felt they had no influence. Red's influence has slipped, and he gets peeved when he sees someone (girl or boy) take the spotlight away from him.

JEAN: After Bill and Red walked out, I was most uncomfortable for the rest of the hour. Bill is a member of my small [project] group, and Red had lunched with some of us following class. I feel I knew both of them well enough to comprehend their feelings. . . . I felt so utterly inept to handle the situation.

HANK: We finally got the grading problem solved just as I had predicted—by jamming it down the throats of a number of people. . . . Those people should have stood up and fought. . . . I got a kick running over some of these people—if they let it be done, then to hell with them.

DUKE: Today I just heckled. Beverly called me on it, and this just got me madder. . . . I showed this by abstaining from discussion. I really feel my ideas don't count any more.

TRAINER: . . . We again had a long break, with many small groups carrying on animated and sometimes hostile discussions. Upon reconvening, we tried to discuss the process by which the grading problem was finally solved. . . . People yelled at each other, not in an accepting, friendly way, but rather with considerable anger and hostility.

HANK: I finally told Red what I thought of him. He is a phony, a real fake, a big jerk!! . . . I would have liked to tell Red a few more things, but Mike

sensibly put a stop to the name calling. This is one of the few times I have really got worked up in this damn class. I hope it's the last time.

BEN: After the break, Max point-blank asked Red and Bill what the hell was wrong with them. In turn Red told Max he resented his trying to be "the big man." . . . Max was accused of "railroading." . . .

MAX: I believe Beverly will be the first woman president of the United States. . . . I really respect her for her knowledge, but somehow she rubs me the wrong way. As for Red and Bill, I am just fed up with them. . . .

MAURICE: My resentment toward Red subsided when I told him what I thought of him. . . . I appreciate he really needs the grade in here to get into Grad School. . . . At present he is in a poor position with the group, but no longer with me. . . .

BEN: I did nothing today to help the discussion. There were already enough people talking—those who needed a chance to blow off. . . . Still, why don't I speak up and support those whose views are similar to mine? It might be due to a combination of reasons . . . retaliation [against] a person . . . who I feel doesn't accept me. . . . Also, to a person who doesn't accept me, my support would not mean much. . . . On the other hand, maybe I am not accepted because I don't let people . . . know where I stand. . . . I also don't want to be classed as a "yes-man" or part of a clique who always support some people and not others. . . . I guess I hate to make enemies, want to remain neutral, and would prefer to be anonymous rather than the target of unfavorable attacks.

TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING: "WE HAD THE BEST GROUP PROJECT"

TRAINER: . . . The first oral presentation by a small [project] group was scheduled for the second hour . . . and the opening period merely served as a warm-up.

LEW: To me the course is now dying . . . as it has been for the last few meetings. . . . The power strugglers were struggling. A few comments were made. But not much more.

FRED: There was a lot of disinterest. [*sic*] Maybe the group is just plain tired of talking about certain things they don't find problems any more. . . .

TRAINER: When a spokesman for the first small-project group requested an extra ten minutes, Hank objected. . . .

HANK: . . . I enjoyed using the tyranny of the minority [toward Red and his boys]. . . . Now, I am afraid I'll watch them give us the shaft when our project comes up. I bet we'll get straight C's from them.

FRANCES: I was honestly ashamed and disgusted that we didn't give the project group the five extra minutes of time which they requested. What difference would it have made? . . .

LARRY [a member of the first project group to report]: My faith in human nature is again beginning to dwindle as a result of this incident. . . . I fear people will judge our group by their reactions to one particular member in the group.

BEVERLY: When Pete made his comments, I wanted to hit him hard enough to blacken both his eyes. . . . On second thought, I wanted to take him by

the hand and lead the poor, warped soul to safety.... (Is he warped because he doesn't believe as I do—interesting thought, isn't it?)

TRAINER: ... Although the presentation was well organized and moved right along, the content was fairly routine and the progress report somewhat tedious. Still, in view of the personalities of the group, its achievement must be considered rather impressive.

RED: By God, no matter what the class thinks, *we had the best group project!* Furthermore, I am willing to bet that we got far more out of analyzing our own group process than did the others. In short—it took us a long time to work up respect, trust, and admiration for each other, but when it came, *it stuck!*

LEW: When I think back on our project, I must say I gained respect for every member in our group. I know our presentation was superior (and I am not one to brag much). As for our written report, I am sure we ... will set the standard for the rest of the class. I feel our group could now manage any problem.

LARRY: Today I left the session feeling really good.... Our project was so successful.... I was really pleased the way it worked out, not only because we presented a good project, but because we had the experience of working with four other fellows with whom we had little in common.

BEVERLY: I don't think we are nearly as hostile and unobjective as we let on. ... I bet most of us gave those kids in Group I the benefit of the doubt.

FRANCES: After our own small-group meeting last night, my mood was horrible today.... Still, I hope I didn't let my personal preoccupation or mood influence me too greatly when I graded them.

HANK: I sure thought their project was rather boring, but I gave them a B+ anyway. We go on next Tuesday. I hope we won't get graded down too far.

TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING: DUKE IS "FINISHED"; MAX IS "JUST GREAT" OR A "FRAT RAT"?

TRAINER: During the first period, the "big three," augmented by Fred and Maurice, presented their project.... The topic was not particularly original nor was the presentation especially creative. But again, a lot of work had obviously gone into the project, and much had been accomplished.

BEN: Today was our day.... Once the project got started, it went along very well. I really felt we gave a very fine report, especially comparing it to the first group, which left me cold.

DUKE: Today did it! I am finished! All last night I didn't get any sleep.... It was only after much fooling around that we finally got started. All in all, things turned out pretty good.... After we were through, we began fighting among ourselves, amid some congratulations.

MAURICE: ... I was sorry I was late.... It made for a poor initial impression which hurt our group.... Duke and Hank's speeches sounded like mumbo-jumbo.... Fred got up and talked, talked, and talked! ... It really burned me up, especially since Duke had sent him a note to summarize.... When I finally got on, I had only five minutes left.... I roared over my main

topics at high speed.... When we had finished, I knew that we had done poorly in comparison to our potential.... We needed the rehearsal which we didn't have....

TRAINER: ... The group received a B− for its efforts. Not bad, considering the quality of both the content and the presentation, and more important, the past reputation which the members of this small group had acquired in the class.

MAURICE: I was quite satisfied with our B−, but Duke, Hank, and Ben were boiling at it.... I see they are really worried about their grades.... Surprisingly, Fred also joined in their chorus of yelps.... I just cannot see how those fellows whom I admired and respected can act so contrary to the standard that I expected from them....

DUKE: When I saw our grade during the break, I sank to despair. Irv ... added insult to injury by stating how good our project was.... I felt like slugging him.... What really got me was the way the class judged our group. I don't know on what basis we got two C's and an E—but we did.... I felt a personal setback because I went to all the trouble to prepare the visual aids and most of the information which we provided. Such injustice has never been dished out before. Irv was basking in his "See-I-told-you-so" look. What a sneaky, low-down way to get back at people you don't like!

HANK: As I predicted, we were given the shaft today by our fair-minded friends, who took out their resentment against us.... What else can you expect from this bunch of knot-heads?

BEN: I know Duke, Hank, and I wouldn't win a personality contest, but I believe these feelings should have been kept out of it. I know no matter how much I dislike anyone, I try not to let it show in my grading.

TRAINER: The topic [presented by the third group] was not particularly interesting, but the presentation clicked and was interspersed with considerable humor.

MAURICE: Even though this presentation was weak on theory, I was tremendously interested in the report.... Max was just great.... I wonder if he knows his potential as a speaker? ...

BEN: I really got burned up—the third group got a B+ for a talk that came from nowhere.... Max cracked a few jokes.

HANK: ... This group got a B+ for doing nothing. Max got his laughs, but so what! He is a "frat rat," so they got a B+. Some justice.

TWENTY-NINTH MEETING: THE A.A. GROUP, "CLOWNS" OR "TOPS"?

TRAINER: Two more project reports.... Both groups took considerable risks by using spontaneous teaching techniques. The City Council project utilized the total class in a giant role-playing demonstration, whereas the Alcoholics Anonymous project regaled the class with a very sensitively portrayed and carefully etched sketch of the problems of a typical alcoholic.

HANK: It is now clear that if we had acted as class clowns, sang, joked, and polished the old apple, we too would have gotten a better grade.... Still,

I must say I enjoyed some of the presentations. What did it prove? Nothing!

MAX: The A.A. project . . . ranked tops with me. They deserved the A which they received. Once again, there were a few C's thrown into the grading, which almost seems unbelievable to me.

THIRTIETH MEETING: "WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?"

TRAINER: Well, here it was—the final meeting. Most everyone was in a good mood. . . . On one occasion, the discussion again became rather heated, with a few people talking right past each other. . . . In evaluating the course [in diary entries] the reactions ranged from Red's "Oh, the hell with it!!" to Max's "without reservations—the best course I ever had at UCLA!!"

FRANCES: This meeting was just a final get-together. . . . Any serious discussion seemed . . . sort of a meaningless gesture. . . . We couldn't hope to iron out all the difficulties. . . . At the end, our discussions were loaded with just as much confusion, misunderstanding, frustration, and conflict as they were at the beginning. A good many individuals left the class with essentially the same attitudes and ways of thinking with which they had entered. . . . People who didn't show immediate, outward improvement in behavior may have gained some inner benefits. . . . I think the course stimulated some real thinking and perhaps laid the basis for some for a positive future. . . . As for myself—I got no immediate help . . . but I think I was helped to realize that there are just as many insecure, frustrated individuals among the vocal, seemingly confident members as there are among us quiet, inhibited ones . . . that in general people are more concerned with what they have to say . . . than in listening to others; that they remember more distinctly what concerns them personally than what primarily involves someone else; and that all people have a pretty basic need to belong, to be accepted, to be well thought of, liked, and encouraged.

DICK: At times today, we carried on in our usual manner. . . . If an outsider had come in to observe us and had been told we had been meeting for the last fifteen weeks to learn about group dynamics, I'm afraid he would have said we hadn't learned a thing. And he would almost be right! . . .

DUKE: During the break, I finally got up to see Irv and talk over various problems. He still rates as a good individual, but his teaching abilities need to be expanded. . . . In retrospect, I think I really learned something—in spite of myself. Maybe thanks to Irv.

MAX: I'm sorry it's all over—for many a reason. For one, I have learned more about myself and others than through any other single experience in my twenty-two years. . . . I have learned something that isn't written in the books—about myself, my fears, my actions, needs, and drives. Irv . . . is the best instructor I have had. . . . He made me think for myself.

HANK: At last the class is over! I won't forget it for some time. . . . I'm glad it's over with and finished! The last class ran true to form—a lot of talk and not too much accomplished. . . . There is no class where I am going to polish the apple to get a grade. . . . And here I'm not going to do anything that will make people think I am knuckling under. . . . Maybe sometime in

the future I can look back and say "By God, I did get something out of this damn class." Only time will tell!

MAURICE: How anyone can walk out of this class and not feel a sense of accomplishment and deep impression is beyond me. . . . I am happy because over the last few weeks people have listened to what I've had to say. This is what I have tried to accomplish. Almost everyone left, whether they knew it or not, with a more permissive attitude.

LARRY: When I think of the uneasiness that existed at the beginning of the class, I realize what a great change has taken place. We have a great bunch of people—many of whom I would like to have as friends. . . . The class has done a lot for me. . . . Some of it I have already put to use . . .

ROBIN: I still do not see how I was trained to be a leader. I can deal no more effectively with people now than I could before. Perhaps unknown benefits have accrued to me, but then perhaps, too, there may have been some disadvantages. Let's just chalk it up to experience, although I'm glad I took this course.

MIKE: It's hard to say what one gets out of a course like this—in the short run. I know I tried to apply some of the techniques in class and haven't been successful too often. Still, I've learned to become aware of the personal feelings and problems of individuals. After this awareness comes knowledge, and then perhaps action. I wish I could take the same course over again with the same group—perhaps some things would be different.

ART: For me it has been both fun and beneficial. . . . I now know how I would have acted if we had to do it all over again. . . .

BEN: Looking back there are some sessions which I enjoyed and from which I probably learned more than my actions show. . . . I have often been very bored, but still something seemed to soak in. . . . Most people have remained the same to me as before I knew them. Only a few, such as Max, Red, and Don, have changed their stripes. I cut myself out of a good grade by my negative participation and by what has been said—but what the hell, it won't count ten years from now. It's been quite an experience, I must say!

BEVERLY: . . . Irv, . . . I hope you know how very much I gained from this class and how much I enjoyed it. . . . Congratulations to your dedication and most of all to your personal security and perspective, which enabled you to take the jabs without ever feeling the need to fight back. . . . I realize it's your work. I also realize what strength it takes. . . .

CLINICAL OBSERVER: The ending proved to be an exercise in euphemism. As a group, there was literally no place to go. . . .

They had been through much together. They were a "group"—whether they knew it or not, whether they liked it or not. In one way or another, they all had changed. . . .

. . . The encouraging thing taking place in the meeting was its look toward the future. . . . The group seemed to be saying—and for once with the kind of consensus unknown to it during its lifetime—that the end was only apparent; more than likely it was really a beginning.

Suggested Questions [7]

On Labeling and Stereotyped Thinking

1. Can you quote at least two illustrations of labeling *in addition* to the label applied to the "big three"?
2. Do you find any indications in this case that anyone saw through any of these labels, or got beyond stereotyped thinking?
3. What significant individual differences—if any—do you find between members of the bloc? (In thinking about this question, include not only what Ben, Hank, and Duke said and wrote, but also descriptions of their behavior.)
4. Does anything in this case illustrate the idea that labeling tends to encourage stereotyped thinking? (Whether your answer is "yes" or "no," cite specific evidence.)
5. Can you quote any statements which suggest that either labeling or stereotyped thinking, or both,
   a. Limited anyone's awareness of current developments, or
   b. Adversely affected anyone's relationships with other group members?
6. In such a situation, what might be done—by whom—to counteract labeling and stereotyped thinking?
   a. So far as you can judge by the abbreviated case report, what *was* done; by whom?

On Participation and "Private Agenda"

1. In this sensitivity training group, what seems to have been the generally accepted meaning of "participation"?
   a. List some of the activities regularly engaged in, as part of their work, by people referred to as "nonparticipants."
   b. In which of these activities did at least one nonparticipator apparently have outstanding ability?
2. Quote statements indicating that participation had somewhat different connotations for various members of the study group.
3. What are some of the reasons why people tend to resent the kind of behavior referred to as nonparticipation?
4. Does anything in this case suggest that there may sometimes be a relationship between a person's "private agenda" (or "hidden agenda") and a tendency not to take an active part in group discussion?
   a. If you see any connection, give quotations to support your opinion, and explain why you think as you do.
5. What are some of the private agenda—hopes, fears, or aims—mentioned in student diaries?

[7] These questions are intended to direct attention primarily to a few ideas about language behavior, ideas mentioned and illustrated in Chap. 5. But we have not included any questions on *precision of language*. Our reason for this omission is that diary entries constitute most of the case report. In such writing, spontaneity of feeling was expected and expressed, rather than precise and finished statements of considered opinions.

6. What other private agenda can be inferred, from behavior described in the case report?

On Spirals of Response

1. In this case, how many illustrations can you find of "dismissal reactions"? Quote relevant material.

2. How many illustrations can you find where an "acceptance response" seems to have contributed to productive interaction; for example, because it encouraged someone to think or speak clearly or appreciatively, or disposed someone to listen receptively?

On Expressions of Feelings, Attitudes, and Assumptions

1. List a range of feelings and attitudes expressed by members of the sensitivity training group.
   a. Which of these feelings and attitudes seem to you appropriate for the kind of situation in which they were expressed, and for the role of the person who expressed them?
   b. Which of these feelings and attitudes—if any—seem to you unfitting in that context—and why?

2. Cite behavior and written comments which seem to you to show a high degree of objectivity by some participant (or participants) in the case situation.

3. Can you quote any judgments (given in student diaries) which you think are based on assumptions, rather than on observation of current facts?
   a. What are some of these unspoken assumptions?
   b. Which of them seem to you realistic, and which—if any—seem unrealistic?

4. Give some examples from this case report of what semanticists call "non-sense" statements (an opinion or a feeling offered as though it were the kind of fact which could be objectively verified).

On Interpreting in Context

1. What illustrations can you find in this case of the idea that different people respond differently to the same outward circumstances, because each interprets what he perceives in the context of his own experience?

2. Analyze the following comment from Marie's diary: "... At the end, Lew asked Hank if he felt he had made progress, and Hank answered 'no.' Then he laughed and turned to Duke. I wondered why he laughed and asked him. Before he could speak, Duke answered for him. 'Can't you see—he can't say anything else—if he did your whole world would collapse.' I think what Duke meant to say was that Hank's whole world would collapse—including Duke's. . . ." (For more complete context, see p. 315, in this abbreviated case report, and p. 99 of the full report.)
   a. Given the situation as it had developed up to that time, would you be inclined to take Hank's answer at its face value? Why, or why not?
   b. In view of what Duke said, why do you think Marie interpreted his answer as she did?

3. In view of other information given in this case, how would you interpret

Hank's diary entry: "I would like to know if Irv feels I am a blocker, or if he is aware that I am overplaying the role I have taken up." (p. 315)

4. From what you can guess as to Beverly's character, analyze the first entry quoted from her diary (on p. 303).

a. Judging only by that comment, what would you say was her opinion—at that time—of the behavior which she was criticizing?

5. If you put together all the remarks made by the trainer about labeling, what would you say was his opinion of that kind of linguistic behavior?

On Experience

1. Quote comments which say, or imply, that some of the twenty-six participants in this case situation thought they had learned something from other participants.

a. Which of these experiences seem to you to be of the kind that a teacher would want, for members of a sensitivity training group?

2. Can you quote diary entries in which there seems to be some conflict between ideas picked up as theories and a conviction derived from firsthand experience?

3. What evidence do you find in this case that being a member of a small-project group was a somewhat different kind of experience from being a member of the group at large? What differences are mentioned?

Comparative Case Analysis

1. Can you remember any instance in which you thought you were the victim of labeling or of stereotyped thinking? If so, what features of that case seem comparable to the situation pictured in the foregoing case report?

2. On what occasions, if any, can you remember that you applied a label to someone else or let your mind be restricted by a stereotype? If you can remember any such behavior on your part, what now seems to you to have been accountable, and what were some of the consequences (for you and for other people)?

Summary Question

What seems to you significant about this case? Why?

Suggested Reading

1. Irving R. Weschler and Jerome Reisel, *Inside a Sensitivity Training Group*, Institute of Industrial Relations, Industrial Relations Monograph, no. 4, University of California, Los Angeles, 1959.

2. Irving R. Weschler, Robert Tannenbaum, and John H. Zinger, *Yardsticks for Human Relations Training*, Adult Education Association, Adult Education Monograph, no. 2, Chicago, 1957.

3. Peter Viereck, "The Unadjusted Man," *Saturday Review*, Nov. 1, 1958, pp. 13–15.

4. S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., New York, 1949.

5. Irving J. Lee, *How to Talk with People: A Program for Preventing*

Troubles That Come When People Talk Together, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1952.

6. Irving J. Lee, *Customs and Crises in Communication: Cases for the Study of Some Barriers and Breakdowns,* Harper & Brothers, New York, 1954.

CASE VII. THE "OUTSIDE" INSPECTORS

The Meyer Incident

On February 15, 1950, Harry W. Meyer submitted a complaint to the chief inspector. He claimed that employees O'Brien, Keenan, and Sharp who—like himself—were classified as "Inspector: Receiving Precision" were spending part of their time doing the work of "Inspector: Outside Production." He contended that these three men should be reclassified and be paid at the higher rate.

The chief inspector rejected this complaint as having no merit. He also pointed out that no complaint had been received from any of the three men for whom Mr. Meyer claimed to speak.

Mr. Meyer then filed an official grievance through the Union. His grievance was to the effect that: (1) O'Brien, Keenan, and Sharp were doing some work as "outside inspectors"; (2) these part-time assignments should be combined into one job; (3) this job should be classified as the work of Inspector: Outside Production; (4) on the basis of occupational seniority, he (Meyer) should be assigned to this job.

Suggestion for Studying This Case

Try to imagine yourself in the position of an impartial arbitrator. This dispute between a management and a union has been referred to you after failure of the parties to settle it at any of the previous stages of the grievance procedure.

If you actually were an arbitrator, you would be expected to establish key facts, which would reveal the merits of the case; to render an award (which would be binding on the parties); and to outline your reasoning (in writing).

Information on the Case as a Whole

Place, Time, and Parties to the Dispute

Place: Burbank, California.

Time span of the case: September, 1949–June 21, 1950 (date of award).

Parties to the dispute: Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and Aeronautical Industrial District Lodge 727, The International Association of Machinists.

Events Leading up to the Meyer Incident

Meyer's layoff and recall. On January 16, 1950, Harry W. Meyer (Inspector: Outside Production) [1] was laid off, owing to lack of work. At that time, he had been with Lockheed for six years.

[1] For information on the job of Inspector: Outside Production, see Appendix A, following this case.

On February 1, 1950, Mr. Meyer was recalled and assigned as Inspector: Receiving Precision.[2] On this job, Meyer's rate of pay was 10 cents an hour less than he had been receiving on his former job.

Modification of a work assignment. In late 1949 (during a period of work contraction) one of the economy measures put into effect at Lockheed had been as follows. "Inside inspectors" [3] were now expected periodically to perform routine inspection at the plants of nearby suppliers. The saving consisted in not having to uncrate and recrate parts on the Lockheed receiving dock before and after inspection. Instead, they could be sent from the suppliers to the Lockheed shipping room.

This inspection work was done, as needed, by employees O'Brien, Keenan, and Sharp on landing gears made at the Menasco plant (three miles from Burbank). The procedure was as follows. Each of these employees checked in and out at Lockheed every day. When there was inspection to be done at Menasco, they took turns doing it. Time cards for a month showed that these three men had spent a total of eighty hours doing this inspection outside the Lockheed plant.

No complaints to management. Neither O'Brien, Keenan, Sharp, nor the Union on their behalf entered any complaint about this part-time assignment outside the plant. Nor did anyone ask for reclassification of that work to the higher paid job of Inspector: Outside Production.

Preventive Work, in the Case Situation

The glossary. In the summer of 1949, a set of definitions had been prepared by the wage and salary department. In September, 1949, it was issued (to supervisors and to Union officials, at the same time) along with copies of job descriptions. The purpose of this glossary was to prevent avoidable misunderstandings as to the official meanings of key words used in job descriptions.[4]

A "*Joint Statement of Policy.*" In November, 1949, after a series of conferences between Management representatives and Union officials, a "Joint Statement of Policy for Application of Job Descriptions" was issued by Lockheed and Lodge 727, I.A.M.[5]

Positions of the Union and of the Company [6]

The Union's position. The occupational summary for the job of Inspector: Outside Production explicitly states "inspection of aircraft on *outside vendors' premises.*" [7] And this is the only job description that specifies *the location* of work.

Employees O'Brien, Keenan, and Sharp have been performing Inspector:

[2] For details, see Appendix B, following this case.

[3] Inspectors: Receiving Precision were colloquially referred to as inside inspectors.

[4] For sample definitions, see Appendix C, following this case.

[5] See Appendix D, following this case, for most of that document.

[6] The information given in this subsection is taken from the record of testimony presented at the hearing.

[7] See Appendix A, following this case, for the whole paragraph from which the preceding excerpt was taken.

Outside Production work on landing gear at Menasco Manufacturing Company. But their classification has not been changed from Inspector: Receiving Precision.

Whenever the men inspect landing gear outside the Lockheed plant, they should be upgraded to Inspector: Outside Production.

By reason of his occupational seniority [8] and of his known ability to do the work, Mr. Meyer is entitled to job preference.

The Company's position. The joint statement of policy [9] agreed to by the Company and the Union, regarding application of descriptions, contains the provision that "... the job description ... shall be interpreted and applied *in its entirety* as a composite picture of the job requirements."

The work in question does not conform to requirements stated in the "Work Performed" section of the job description for Inspector: Outside Production, such as "determination of inspection procedures," and "consultation with, and assistance to, vendors."

Moreover, employees in the classification of Inspector: Outside Production do *all* their inspection outside Lockheed. Thus they are not subject to the kind and amount of supervision given to in-plant workers. They do not check in and out at Lockheed. Often, they even get their initial work assignments over the telephone, when they call in asking where to report for work.

Employees O'Brien, Keenan, and Sharp have been doing *the same work* on the Menasco premises that they do at Lockheed. The only difference is in the location of work, a difference which is an inadequate basis for reclassification.

The issue is whether a Lockheed inspection, on the premises of an outside vendor, must be performed by an employee classified as an Inspector: Outside Production.

In this case, that question must be answered in the negative, because:

1. The actual duties performed by these employees are fully covered by the job description for Inspection: Receiving Precision, and

2. Their work does not incorporate essential elements of Inspection: Outside Production, elements such as consultation with, and assistance to, personnel of vendors.

The Issue

As presented for arbitration, the issue was: "On the basis of certain duties performed by employees G. B. O'Brien, G. H. Keenan, and L. S. Sharp, is Harry W. Meyer entitled to the classification of Inspector: Outside Production, with an increase in his rate of pay to $1.90 an hour?"

Your Decision and Reasoning

What is your award? By what reasons do you support your decision?

[8] See Appendix E: Applicable Contract Provisions, following this case.

[9] See Appendix D, following this case, for excerpts.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Inspector: Outside Production (at the time of this case, the rate for this job was $1.90 an hour).

Occupational Summary

This occupation requires the inspection of aircraft parts, assemblies, tooling, and material on outside vendors' and subcontractors' premises.

Work Performed

Performs the functions mentioned below under limited or indirect supervision at vendors' or subcontractors' plants, working in one or more assigned fields. . . .

Determines inspection procedure to be followed at various outside vendors' or subcontractors' plants in order to secure specified quality, giving due consideration to such factors as cost and production time.

[Two paragraphs omitted]

Consults with vendors and subcontractors regarding the interpretation of specifications, blueprints, etc.; rejections, possibility of rework, salvage, or other disposition; and other problems requiring liaison between outside plant and Lockheed personnel.

May assist vendor with production problems as required, by demonstrating proper methods of production to assure conformance to Lockheed specifications.

Rejects faulty parts.

. . . Determines suitability of vendors' equipment and manufacturing practices to meet Lockheed inspection and engineering requirements.

Knowledge and Ability Required

Knowledge of all types of outside vendor and subcontractor inspections on castings, forgings, tools, all types of parts and assemblies; ability to use precision measuring and layout instruments, to understand outside shop inspection, practice, and procedure; to interpret complex blueprints; to use shop trigonometry.

Prepared by Wage and Salary, 8-31-49.

Appendix B

Inspector: Receiving Precision (at the time of this case, the rate for this job was $1.80 an hour).

Occupational Summary

Inspect all types of complex machined parts and precision assemblies received from vendors, for workmanship, dimensional accuracy, interchangeability, and compliance with applicable blueprints and specifications.

Work Performed

Make first-article, percentage, or 100 per cent inspection of machined parts *and* precision assemblies *received from vendors* for workmanship, dimensional accuracy. . . . [same as above]

Determine method of inspection, source, and application of reference data and type of precision instruments and/or surface plate setups necessary to make said inspection.

. . . improvise or adapt inspection, measuring instruments as required.

Stamp or otherwise approve acceptable parts and assemblies and reject unacceptable items. Prepare documentation as required.

Knowledge and Ability Required

Apply a complete knowledge of receiving inspection practice and procedure, A.N., vendor's, and company specifications relative to the inspection of machined parts and precision assemblies described herein. Apply a knowledge of precision assemblies, welding, and processing techniques, and the machineability of metals.

To read and interpret complex detail assembly blueprints. To use shop mathematics including trigonometry. To make any type of precision instrument surface plate setup as required.

To manually pull, push, or lift over 25 pounds.

Prepared by Wage and Salary, 8-31-49.

(As with other in-plant workers, direct supervision was available at all times for people doing this type of inspection—except when inspection was done outside Lockheed.)

Appendix C

A Glossary of Terms and Phrases as Used in the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation: Technical and Office Job Descriptions

(The following are a few excerpts from that document.)

In preparation of the job descriptions the following terms and words are given definition and meaning to clearly indicate the common and consistent interpretation to be placed on them by all persons using the descriptions.

The meaning of words and phrases not included in this glossary shall be as defined by Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

AS REQUIRED:

Means performance of work operations if and when such are necessary, as long as they are within the level of difficulty described.

DETERMINE:

To choose, judge, or decide; to select pertinent data or information from documents, records, etc.

KNOWLEDGE:

To know and understand the principles, operations, and procedures required of a specific job or function and the ability to apply such knowledge to the performance of the specified job.

LIAISON:

The act of investigating problems, coordinating activities, and contacting personnel with a view to arriving at mutually acceptable agreements, changes, etc.

MAY:

When used as the first word of a sentence or phrase, means that the function is performed by *some* of the personnel holding the classification, or that the function is occasionally performed, but is not a requisite for the classification.

Appendix D

Joint Statement of Policy for Application of Job Descriptions

The following basic principles governed the preparation of these descriptions; these same principles are to govern their use.

1. The title selected for an occupation and/or classification is that which most clearly indicates the general nature and character of the work performed, and yet serves to set the occupation and/or classification apart from others described.

2. The occupational summary developed for each occupation is a brief description of the occupation as a whole, the purpose of which is to set it forth in separation from other occupations.

3. The job description describes typical and normal requirements. These requirements are characteristic of the job and illustrate a level of difficulty of work and are not intended to list or describe all work operations, or tasks done within the classification. . . .

4. [Omitted]

5. The descriptions were prepared on the basis:

A. That as a part of promotional procedure a worker occasionally performs some of the work of higher-rated jobs under close guidance and instructions in order to qualify for advancement.

[Three paragraphs omitted]

6. The job description is written to define and illustrate the job standard to be established and as such shall be interpreted and applied in its entirety as a composite picture of the job requirements. This means that the occupational summary, work performed (typical materials, tools, and equipment used—when applicable), and knowledge and ability required all must be considered in arriving at the proper classification.

In order to secure or hold the classification, the employee must be assigned regularly and consistently to that work which distinguishes the occupation and classification from other occupations and classifications.

An employee's classification shall be determined in the light of the highest requirements for knowledge, ability, and skill necessary to perform his regular assigned duties. In making this determination, duties that are performed infrequently or rarely shall not be considered or made the basis of granting the higher classification. This would not be applicable, however, to intermittent duties of a higher level to which the employee is specially assigned in an area where the prevailing day-to-day routine may fall in lower level requirements. If the employee on such an assignment is expected to possess and apply the

knowledge, skill, and ability necessary for performance of the higher level work, he is entitled to the higher classification even though the majority of his work time may be spent on the lower level work. . . .

[Three paragraphs omitted]

8. The job descriptions are not intended for, and should not be confused with, operation sheets, work instructions, or work assignments sheets, etc.

9. The job descriptions are to be interpreted in the light of the purpose for which they were written and not for the purpose of accomplishing mass upgradings or downgradings of employees. . . .

Prepared by Wage and Salary, 11-9-49.

Appendix E

Applicable Contract Provisions

Article IV. Section 3—Layoffs.

(2) Employees with two (2) or more years' seniority shall be laid off in order of seniority applied by occupation, within the Company, where ability, skill, and efficiency are substantially equal. . . .

(6) An employee with five (5) years' or more, but less than eight (8) years' seniority scheduled for layoff, will be considered for placement in a lower rated classification for which he is qualified.

* * * * * *

What More Might Be Done, in This Case, and What More Might Be Learned from It?

Having rendered your award on a short-term, arbitrable issue, how about re-viewing this case from another angle? For instance, you might look at it as though you were (1) the personnel administrator at Lockheed, or (2) a representative of line management (at the top management level), or (3) a union officer in Lodge 727.

In any such role you would be responsible for thinking about long-term organizational requirements, as well as about short-term issues. And you would have advantages not available to anyone who is called upon *merely* to settle a dispute. For example:

Instead of being limited to deciding a single, disputed issue, you could try to correct flaws in the situation as a whole, flaws which seem to you accountable for major difficulties. And instead of being bound by documents as previously written, you could make plans for negotiating any changes that seem to you desirable. In other words, instead of concentrating primarily *on the past,* and rendering a verdict *on what other people have said and done,* you could *focus on the future.* And you could try to work with other insiders, to meet needs of the situation as a whole.

Here are some of the questions that you might use as starters:

Job Descriptions

1. In view of past events in this case, does it seem that the occupational summary for Inspectors: Outside Production might be improved? If so, what change(s) would you recommend?

Job Titles and Job Jargon

1. Considering the nature of the dispute, what importance—if any—would you attribute to the informal titles *inside* inspectors and *outside* inspectors? If that usage seems to you significant, what might be done about it?

2. Do you know of other situations in which differences between official language and informal job jargon seem to you significant? If so, give illustrations.

Defining an Issue

1. Compare the issue submitted to arbitration (see p. 330) with the company's statement of "the issue" (on p. 330). What importance—if any—do you attribute to the differences between those two statements?

2. If the parties to this dispute had asked you to formulate the issue for arbitration, how might you have worded it?

Labor Relations

1. What features of this case seem to you significant as indicating the quality of labor relations?

2. What are some of the things that might be done "now" (after the arbitration) with the purpose of improving labor relations?

a. What action might appropriately be initiated by the union?

b. What action would naturally be set in motion by management?

3. Comment on the following opinion (expressed by one person who analyzed this case): "Management's action is typical of the way companies try to eliminate a higher job classification. By gradually extending the mileage, Lockheed could eventually get all their outside inspecting done by Inspectors: Receiving Precision."

Management by Shared Objectives

1. What activities in this case seem to accord with the aim of *management by shared objectives*? (See Chapter 10, and suggested reading, for explanation and illustration of this concept.)

2. In looking ahead, after the arbitration, can you see further opportunities to work for a greater measure of "co-active control"? If so, and if you see advantages in working toward such aims, outline specific plans for action.

Union Policy and Procedure

1. What was unusual about the manner in which Mr. Meyer made his first complaint?

a. What, if anything, is decreed by current labor laws about procedure for a union member who wishes to act independently in making a complaint?

2. What possible advantages, and disadvantages, can you see—for a union—

a. In *refusing to handle* such a grievance?

b. In *undertaking to support* such a grievance?

3. If you were a union president and your union lost the arbitration case, what action—if any—might you take designed to:

a. Help Mr. Meyer accept the current situation, including the award?

b. Prevent any further misunderstanding concerning the two job classifications?

Employee Motives

1. Without knowing any more about Mr. Meyer than the facts given in the preceding report, what inferences seem reasonable as to why he made his complaint?

2. What reasons might employees O'Brien, Keenan, and Sharp have had for *not* complaining about the change in their work assignment?

Preventive Work in Personnel Relations and Labor Relations

1. *The glossary*

a. Does the dispute that followed Mr. Meyer's complaint lead you to believe that the preventive work done in making the glossary was useless? Give reasons for your opinion.

b. In this case, and in other similar situations that you know about, what are some of the advantages that might be anticipated from such an effort to clarify the meaning of key words officially used in connection with work?

c. What potential causes of misunderstandings cannot be overcome by verbal definitions?

d. Which of these possible "troublemakers" frequently occasion friction in labor relations?

e. Do you approve management's procedure in distributing the glossary to union officials *at the same time* when it was given to supervisors? Why, or why not?

f. In addition to having the document given out, what else might you recommend doing about it?

2. *The joint statement of policy*

a. Judging from events reported in this case, what advantages—if any—do there seem to have been in making such a statement?

b. Does the subject of job descriptions seem to you appropriate for a joint statement, by a management and a union? Why, or why not?

c. What other areas (if any) in personnel relations and labor relations seem to you suitable as subjects for policy statements, made either jointly or separately, or both?

d. Are there any words in the statement on interpreting job descriptions that seem to you unfitting for a statement of *policy?* If so, what change(s) would you recommend?

Summary Question

In thinking about needs for long-term action in this case, what general ideas or operative principles that occur to you seem especially important because they apply to many other situations also?

Suggested Reading

1. H. C. Triandis, "Categories of Thought of Managers, Clerks, and Workers about Jobs and People in an Industry," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 43, no. 5, pp. 338–344, October, 1959.
2. *Glossary of Personnel Management and Industrial Relations Terms*, Society for Advancement of Management, S.A.M. Division of Management Research and Development, 1959.
3. E. Lanham, *Job Evaluation*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1955 (especially chaps. 3 and 13).
4. R. L. Harrison, "Workers' Perceptions and Job Success," *Personnel Psychology*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 619–625, Winter, 1959.

CASE VIII. THE "MISSION" [1]

The Handor Incident

Shortly after learning of Colonel Handor's assignment, Colonel Wilson (Executive Officer) went to see General Kittredge (the C.O.). He wanted to find out what the general had in mind.

Their lengthy—and at times heated—conversation ended like this:

GENERAL KITTREDGE: We'd better drop it. Fix it up for me, will you, Pete? Do whatever you think you should.

COLONEL WILSON: Sure, General. I'll do anything I can. But you'll tell Handor the deal is off, won't you? That's the important thing.

GENERAL KITTREDGE: No, I can't do that. . . . If you want to do this job through the organization, go ahead and do it. But I hold you accountable. Let me know what you come up with.

COLONEL WILSON: That sure puts me on the spot, General.

GENERAL KITTREDGE: That's where you do best, Pete.

* * * * * *

Suggestion for Analyzing This Case

Try to imagine yourself in Colonel Wilson's organizational position. After studying the information given in the following pages, what might you do? (What course of action seems to you best suited to meet major requirements of the situation in which you now find yourself on the spot?)

[1] This case, prepared for use by the Incident Process, is adapted from "The Case of Colonel Peter Wilson," published by Harbridge House, Inc., Boston. Our adaptation, using much of their material, is published with their permission. We secured further information by going to the depot and talking with army officers.

Information on the Case as a Whole

More about the Incident

When did it happen? In the summer of 1950. (From here on, this time will be referred to as "now.") "Today" is Monday.

Where? Hastings Depot, Virginia.

Who is directly involved? In addition to the three persons mentioned in the Incident, see Appendix: Organization at Hastings Depot.

How did this Incident develop? What has happened so far?

Events that led up to the Incident include the following:

Handor's Status and His Original Assignment

Colonel Handor is now on reserve status, having retired from active duty in 1945. He is now professor of industrial management at a business school in the Middle West. This summer, while his classes are in recess, he is doing the customary two-weeks' tour of active duty required by his reserve status. His original assignment for this two-week period was to the Pentagon.

Reassignment to Hastings

Recently, General Kittredge happened to be at the Pentagon, where he heard about Colonel Handor's assignment. Kittredge had become acquainted with Handor during the Second World War. He greatly respects Handor's reputation as an expert on warehousing and efficient use of storage space. Thinking of his own acute need at Hastings, he managed to get Handor reassigned. (For details on the storage situation at Hastings, see page 344.)

"Selling" Handor

In persuading Handor that it would be to his advantage to do his tour of duty at Hastings, General Kittredge assured him that he would "have a free hand" in making a new storage plan (see page 340). He did not mention to Handor that he had already assigned this "mission" to his regular storage officer. He also suggested that to repeat the distinguished job which Colonel Handor had done at Gunlock Depot in 1944 would be a brilliant achievement. It would be quite a feather in Handor's cap if, in two weeks, he could come up with a complete rewarehousing plan for Hastings. In a near-emergency situation, this feat would make it possible to move up—by two weeks—the timetable of a vital mission.

Handor Accepts

After talking with General Kittredge, Handor decided that the Hastings assignment would be a great opportunity. He felt sure that he could complete the mission within the allotted time, with benefit to Hastings and credit to himself.

The Executive Officer Finds Out about It, and Starts to Plan

The general did not inform his executive officer of Handor's assignment to Hastings. Thus, Handor's appearance at the depot came as a complete surprise to Wilson. When Wilson learned that Handor was to be at Hastings for two weeks, he gave some thought to the question: *What kind of observation tour can be set up for Handor,* something that might help us with our storage problem and also be satisfactory to him?

(Wilson had made Handor's acquaintance during the Second World War. And he knew about Handor's outstanding reputation as an authority on matters of warehousing and space utilization.)

Handor Calls on Wilson

When Handor had finished his duty call on General Kittredge, he went to see Wilson. They compared notes on what they had been doing since 1945.

Handor mentioned his pleasure in having a chance to get caught up again with what was going on in the army. He said he had come back to get his hand in again, so he would be ready for an extended tour of active duty when he was tapped.[2]

COLONEL WILSON: What has the general worked out with you as an assignment during your time here?

HANDOR: He was all ready for me as usual. What a power house he is! He wants me to make up a rewarehousing plan, starting with a whole new layout of space—except for the bin areas. I gather the matériel got tangled up when it started pouring in from the closed depots, and that you're already cramped for space, in spite of your not having anything like the wartime inventory.

It looks like a honey to me. He wants me to plow through the whole job in one big hurry. I guess I'll work with Mr. Brown, of the management office, and with the old man himself—and I suppose with you, of course. It's quite an order for me, even though I did the same thing at Gunlock Depot in 1944.

He wants a layout and report by the end of the two weeks; says he probably won't start moving the stock for three weeks.

It looks awful good to me. Nothing like turning over a whole depot in no time at all.

(This answer to his question naturally came as a shock to Wilson. But he remained outwardly calm and assured Handor that he would do all he could to make the latter's stay at Hastings a profitable one.)

Conversation between Wilson and the C.O.

Shortly after this talk with Handor, Wilson went to see the general. For the end of their conversation, see the Handor Incident. Here's more of what they said:

[2] At that time, many people thought that the Korean situation might precipitate a third world war.

GENERAL KITTREDGE: Hello, Pete. Did you see Jim Handor? It's good to have him around again, isn't it? Now we can get moving on the warehousing job. He straightened out the bulk storage at Gunlock in one of the slickest operations I ever saw.

COLONEL WILSON: I've just been talking with Jim, and I wanted to ask you about it. He says you've asked him to come up with a rewarehousing plan in two weeks, so the stock can be moved in three weeks.

GENERAL KITTREDGE: That's right. With Jim here, we can move up the timing of the whole thing. I'll spend a lot of time on it, and so will Charles Brown—from the plans angle. You too, when you can. We'll straighten out this mess. It was a good idea, wasn't it, to get Handor ordered up here for two weeks?

COLONEL WILSON: I didn't know you had got him ordered up here. Don't I rate news like that?

GENERAL KITTREDGE: I thought I told you. Well, anyhow, this should be a pleasant surprise.

COLONEL WILSON: But we aren't ready for him. Collins isn't ready for him. You've already got Collins under way. You're thinking of having Handor work under Collins on this thing, aren't you?

GENERAL KITTREDGE: Nope.

COLONEL WILSON: You're *not?*

GENERAL KITTREDGE: Nope.

COLONEL WILSON: Let me get this straight. You want Handor, in here after five years out of the army, to do in *two* weeks what you've already asked Collins, your own storage officer, to do in *six* weeks? You and an old crony are going to take over what I spent a month setting up a depot team for?

GENERAL KITTREDGE: Yup. Collins is slow. Handor is fast. Handor is smart. Collins isn't.

COLONEL WILSON: When did you decide that?

GENERAL KITTREDGE: I always wished I had Handor here. It's been clear to me all along that Collins has been bucking this thing. He didn't foul up the storage, but he's always bleating about how long it's going to take and how shorthanded he is. He's afraid of this problem.

COLONEL WILSON: I can't agree with that. He tells me he doesn't know how long it will take to rewarehouse the stores until he gets the layout done. You gave him several months to work in after the plan was done, anyway. And he's shorthanded. You know that. He'd have to perform a miracle to meet your schedule. And now you've hired a magician to beat that. Have you said anything to Collins about this? Have you thought what effect this is going to have on him?

GENERAL KITTREDGE: No. Why should I? He can go puttering along with his committee meetings as long as he wants to. In the meantime, I'll get the job done.

(The conversation continued for some time. Wilson insisted that Handor couldn't possibly make an adequate plan within his two-week tour of duty. He also pointed out that the storage problems at Hastings Depot were far

more complicated than those which existed at Gunlock in 1944. And he asked how Collins could be expected to put into effect a complex plan which had been worked out by someone else.)

(The general expressed disgust at being "held up, on an urgent assignment, by a mediocre organization." He cited examples of matters on which Collins and his committee had been "hung up," although they were "perfectly easy to deal with." He asserted that it was not only his right, but his duty, to "cut through knots" when he could.)

GENERAL KITTREDGE: The trouble with you is you don't give a damn about anything but sweetness and light in the ranks. You don't seem to realize that it takes more than a chaplain to get the work done.

COLONEL WILSON: If you keep on running the depot this way, everyone in it will hate the sight of you. You've already got them scared to death.

* * * * * *

Shortly after that, the general said: "We'd better drop it. . . ." (See the Handor Incident for the end of their talk.)

Background Information on Hastings Depot

During World War II, Hastings had grown to be one of the largest army depots in the U.S.A. After the war, it was swiftly reduced to a minor operation. For some time, it was kept open only with a minimum complement. But in 1949, the functions of a number of other depots (closed for reasons of economy) were transferred to Hastings. Thus it again became an important station.

In January, 1950, Brigadier General Douglas Kittredge assumed command of Hastings Depot, to preside over its expansion. In the summer of 1950, with the start of "police action" in Korea, its importance has been further increased, and the turnover of matériel now approximates wartime proportions.

Notes on Key Participants and Their Relationships

General Kittredge (Commanding Officer at Hastings). Kittredge has a brilliant record. His extensive experience with logistics, not only in wartime but also in peacetime, has made him widely known and highly respected in the regular army.

Wilson has sometimes found that, as a chief executive, the general is somewhat difficult to work with. The C.O. tends to be a perfectionist—for his subordinates. He expresses sharp criticisms on performance that falls short of perfection. And he seems to lack organization sense, preferring to work through a few individuals whom he trusts rather than through channels. He appears to feel no responsibility for developing his organization. Rather, he stresses *results* (technical, short-term variety). In getting these results, he seems to care little about the cost in human terms. The general has shown himself to be a driver. He seems tireless and restless. His behavior has often been explosive.

But Wilson likes the general as a person. He also respects the general's ability and energy and recognizes the value of his long experience in the regular army. Above all, Wilson appreciates the fact that the C.O. is no stuffed shirt. On

one occasion he made the following comment: "The number one fact for an executive officer is his C.O. You have to know him, follow his wishes, and yet at the same time do what you have to do to keep his organization intact, and improving, and working together under him. I think any executive is likely to be torn between following out the orders of the Commanding General and at the same time satisfying the legitimate demands of subordinate officers. The executive is very often in a position of trying to reconcile the two. At Hastings, I have to act as a buffer between the commander and the division chiefs. If I didn't, this place would be a dog-eat-dog, each-man-for-himself, and to-hell-with-coordination kind of outfit. The general has more of his officers worrying about what he thinks of them than of what is involved in getting their work done efficiently. Worry about the commander's criticism often means that an outfit becomes a battleground of individuals fighting for approval and alibiing their mistakes by blaming them on other divisions. One thing I'm very lucky in: I can say to the general whatever is on my mind. He and I can talk over what we disagree on, without regard to the prerogatives of rank."

Colonel Peter Wilson's career. Before entering the army, Wilson had experience as an executive in the parts distributing branch of an automobile company. During the Second World War, he came to Kittredge's attention when the two officers were assigned to make a study of warehousing and inventory control.

After the war, Wilson stayed in the department of the army as a civilian executive. In June, 1950, he returned to uniform.

General Kittredge watched Wilson's army career with interest. Shortly after Wilson returned to active duty, Kittredge installed him as executive officer at Hastings.

Wilson and Handor. Wilson knew Handor slightly during the war when they both served with Kittredge. Wilson ranks Handor.

Wilson, the Mission, and the Task Force. It was at Wilson's urging and with his assistance in planning that General Kittredge assigned to Colonel Collins and his committee the mission of making a plan for more efficient use of storage space at Hastings.

Wilson worked with Collins to set up a task force, consisting of division heads (or their assistants). In making this selection, Wilson had—and has—several ideas in mind.

First, in developing the plan for rewarehousing, he hopes to get the benefit of experience from people in six divisions.

Second, he thinks that when the time comes to move the stock—in putting the plan into effect—this committee arrangement will make for efficient coordination.

Third, he sees this mission as a "pilot operation in bringing the divisions closer together on each other's problems."

Fourth, Colonel Wilson hopes that this assignment will help to develop Colonel Collins.

(He is convinced that if an outsider were to take over the mission, all these aims would be imperiled. And he feels that Collins and his committee have made a satisfactory start.)

Colonel James Handor (reserve officer, expert on warehousing, professor of industrial management). During the war, Handor "served extensively with Kittredge." At that time, he became a great admirer of the general's. Their relationship was, and is, friendly.

Handor is an acknowledged authority on warehousing, especially on efficient layout and use of space. He has had considerable experience in this kind of work. Even as a civilian, he has served as a consultant on warehousing.

Since leaving the army in 1945, he has become a professor of industrial management at a business school in the Middle West.

In the past, Handor has shown himself to be somewhat authoritarian in attitude and speech. (For indications of this attitude, see page 339, Handor's answer to Wilson's question.) During their previous acquaintance, Wilson had seen other evidences of this trait.

Handor's ideas about organizational relationships and requirements appear to be similar to the general's. (See page 339 for remarks which indicate his views.)

Colonel Handor ranks Colonel Collins, by seniority of service.

Colonel Collins (regular storage officer). Collins's efficiency ratings have always been "O.K." Wilson has found Collins "adequate—an organization man, not the world's best storage officer, but conscientious. And he knows his work." He has shown himself to be unassuming, quiet, and sincere. "He likes to run his own show." But he has shown that he can be flexible. Wilson has always found him "reasonable."

The general has little use for Collins. (See page 340 for a comment.) It was on Colonel Wilson's recommendation that General Kittredge assigned to Collins the mission of working out a plan for more efficient use of storage space at Hastings. He has worked with Wilson to set up the task force.

Mr. Charles Brown (head of management office). Brown is the only civilian executive at Hastings. He is an industrial engineer and has a master's degree in business administration. During the war, he served under Kittredge, reaching the rank of lieutenant. Near the end of the war, Brown was retired for medical disability. It was at that time that he got his master's degree, after which he returned to the army in a civilian status.

Although only in his early thirties, Brown has already won a "creditable reputation in the management field." During the war, Kittredge regarded Brown as one of the up-and-coming young officers in the regular army. He is pleased to have Brown on his staff at Hastings. Wilson respects Brown's ability. The two men have achieved a friendly and effective working relationship.

Mr. Brown wrote a report to the general, indicating the need for a new storage plan. (See three paragraphs below, for Brown's opinion on what needs to be done.)

Other Members of the task force. No information is available as to the personalities of these other men. We know only that (1) this committee is composed of six division heads (or their assistants); (2) several meetings have already been held (during the two weeks since the committee was set up); (3) committee members reportedly feel that they have already made some progress toward working out an effective plan for storage at Hastings.

The Storage Situation at Hastings

How did the matériel get fouled up? "Everyone knows" that the storage areas are honeycombed with waste spaces because of the *haphazard disposition of matériel during the depot's relatively inactive years.* And the inventory of certain classes of stock far exceeds both the needs of the depot and the areas assigned.

Mr. Brown's opinion. In his report to the general, Mr. Brown stated that there was need for a new storage plan. In his opinion, the "large unserviceable inventory" is only part of the difficulty. "The most urgent need is to rearrange existing supplies in order to make room for matériel that is now coming in for transshipment."

How Is the Plan to Be Implemented? Once a plan is made for a more efficient disposition of the stock, the task of actually shifting all the classes of stock will be a major operation for the civilian labor force. Planning for that operation will have to be thorough and detailed if the job is to be done without shutting down the depot. Even if the rearranging of matériel is spread over a considerable period of time, it will mean extra work for an already hard-pressed labor force.

Critical Aspects of the Time Factor

Schedule for the mission. The mission (making a new plan for storage) was assigned to Collins two weeks before the Handor Incident. Collins was given six weeks to come up with a plan. At least four months will probably be needed to rearrange the stock when the new plan is put into effect.

Breakdown of Handor's Tour of Duty

Of the two weeks during which Handor is to be at Hastings, how many full days might be available—at best—for work on the mission?

Monday (today): Processing in—filling out necessary forms, etc. Paying courtesy calls. Getting acquainted.

Tuesday: Handor could set to work—*if* he gets complete cooperation from everyone on whom he must depend for information and other kinds of assistance. *But* part of the day will necessarily be taken up with making technical arrangements; such as, for office space, for secretarial help, in getting supplies and equipment.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: Available for concentrated work with and through the organization.

Saturday, Sunday: On week ends, civilian civil service people do not ordinarily come in. If any of them are to come in, special arrangements must be made and overtime must be paid.

On the other hand, Colonel Handor could continue to work. There are no overtime restrictions on officers. This means that other officers could work with him—if they wish to do so. However, Handor should be prepared for the possibility that some member might find it "impossible" to make himself available during the week end.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: These four days should be available for uninterrupted work. However, if the completed plan is to be typed before the end of Friday, most of it should be drafted and dictated by the end of Thursday.

Friday: Normally, this day would be spent by Handor in processing out. In other words: as working time, how long is this two-weeks' tour of duty? Probably not more than eight clear days.

When is this time available? It starts two weeks after the assignment of the mission to Collins, without opportunity for previous planning or consultation. And it will be over before there is any possibility of starting to move the stock (to put the new storage plan into effect).

What Needs to Be Decided: Right Now?

1. In view of the information given in the preceding pages, what is immediately at issue for "you" (in your role as Colonel Wilson)?

Incidentally, here's one more feature of your immediate assignment. When you returned just now from your talk with the general, you found on your desk a note saying: "Colonel Collins telephoned. He wants to talk with you *right away*." This note might make you ask yourself: Has the grapevine carried to Collins the news that Handor is here? Does he know, or guess, that the general has given the mission to Handor?

2. What seems to be at stake here, both now and for the long run?

Your Decision

In Wilson's position, what might you do about this Incident? Can you think of any integrative solution, one that might reconcile a range of requirements and draw on all available resources?

What More Needs to Be Done, in This Situation, and What Might Be Learned from It?

After putting into effect the short-run decision called for by the Handor Incident—

I. *What more might be done—by an "exec"—to meet the needs of this situation?*

Even the relatively meager report, given here, suggests possibilities for remedial and preventive action by a person in Colonel Wilson's organizational position. For instance—

A. Managerial functions

Of the following managerial functions, which need to be performed more effectively—in future—and what might an executive officer try to do about:

1. Planning

What weaknesses in planning have been revealed by the Handor Incident? How and with whom might an executive officer work in

trying to make planning more efficient—in regard both to technical assignments and to human resources?

2. Staffing
   What might be done to prevent the inefficiency involved in over-dependence on personal likes and dislikes when it comes to staffing? If old-cronyism is a factor in this situation, how—if at all—might an executive officer try to correct that tendency?
3. Communicating between management representatives
   In a broad sense, all our difficulties (in this case) might be classified as weaknesses in communication. But specifically:
   a. What practices of "clearing" look like flaws in our situation? And what seems accountable for such behavior?
   b. Is it reasonable to hope that a man of General Kittredge's temperament could be persuaded to change his attitudes and habits sufficiently so that:
      (1) He would not make major decisions on impulse, rather than on the basis of a considered opinion.
      (2) He would not bypass his executive officer and other members of his permanent organization.
      (3) He would not overlook the effect on his organization of important decisions and actions that he takes.
   c. If it seems unrealistic to hope that the general could change to this extent, what could the executive officer appropriately do that might result in more rapid and adequate communication between him and the C.O.?
4. Delegating
   How, if at all, might an executive officer try to correct faulty practices in delegating?
5. Controlling (by follow-up, performance appraisal, and coaching on the job)
   What are some of the things an executive officer might do to reduce the waste entailed by a general's low opinion of certain members of his staff ("a mediocre organization") and by the general's assumption as to what he should do about it?
6. Coordinating
   What might an executive officer do (in addition to what he has done) in order to bring about more effective coordination between people at different organizational levels and in different divisions?

B. Committee work
In this situation, what might be done to capitalize on recognized advantages of committee work and to reduce—or eliminate—disadvantages?

C. Status and rank

1. For short-term and long-term decisions in this situation, what are some of the reasons for thinking about facts—and differences—of status? For example, in relation to:
   a. Civilian and military personnel
   b. Rank and seniority in the regular army
   c. Organizational functions

II. *What more might be learned from this case?* [3]

A. By sizing up a situation (for the long run)

1. In this situation, what are some of the unfavorable forces that an executive officer would be responsible for trying to understand and to control? (For example, what kinds of behavior seem to have been accountable for difficulties that are revealed in the Handor Incident?)
2. What forces seem to have favored productive interaction in this case?
3. What are some of the underlying assumptions that need to be considered in this situation?
4. What leads for semantic analysis might be worth following? For example:

a. In working with Handor and with other people of his stamp, what are some of the implications of the following remarks (in which the emphasis is ours): "It looks like a honey to me. He wants me *to plow through* the whole job *in one big hurry*.... It looks awful good to me. Nothing like *turning over a whole depot in no time at all*."

"It's quite an order *for me*, even though I did *the same thing* at Gunlock...."

"*I guess I'll work with* Mr. Brown ... and *I suppose with* you—*of course*."

b. And what about some of "your own" remarks? For instance, to the general:

(1) "*You and an old crony* are going to *take over* what *I spent a month* setting up a depot team for?"

(2) "If you keep on running the depot this way, everyone in it will hate the sight of you. You've already got them scared to death."

B. About interviewing

In connection with the Handor Incident, "you" (in Colonel Wilson's role) have already had two interviews. Presumably your decision for dealing with the Incident calls for further interviewing.

1. What general ideas about interviewing were illustrated in your talks with Handor and with the C.O.?
2. In planning for talks with Handor and with Collins—on the subject of the mission—what long-term social aims (if any) might you wish to keep in mind?

C. Reviewing decisions

1. Comment on the following generalization: "Once you have made a decision, never look back on it."
2. In what ways might it make a difference—

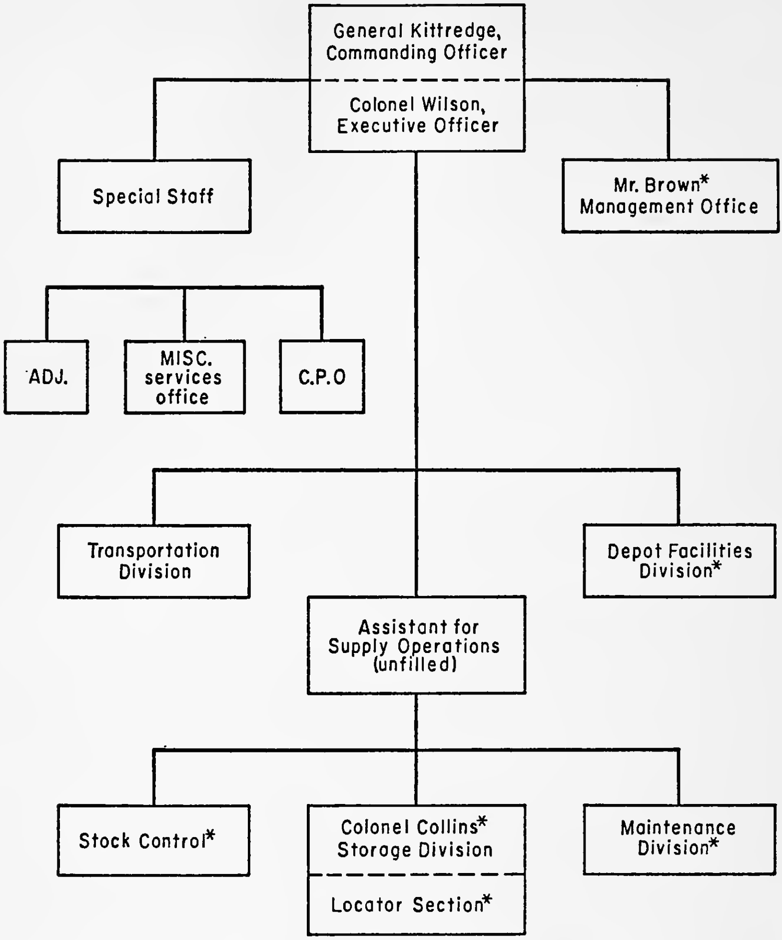
a. When one reconsiders (or reviews) a decision

b. Why the review is undertaken, and

c. Who looks back?

[3] Please regard the following questions *not* as a separate section but as a continuation and a branching out of the effort to think through the implications of an Incident, and to learn from the situation as a whole.

Appendix: Organization at Hastings Depot



* On Colonel Collins's task force (working on the "mission").

D. About dismissal reactions

In what ways does expressive behavior—in action and inaction as well as in words—by participants in this case illustrate Professor Lee's [4] ideas about dismissal reactions? For instance—

1. What remarks reportedly made by General Kittredge, Colonel Handor, and Colonel Wilson would you classify as reflecting some degree of dismissal?
2. What development in this case illustrates the idea that unfriendly talk doesn't necessarily go from bad to worse?

[4] See Index for page reference to Professor Lee's definition of this term.

E. By comparative case analysis
1. Judging by your own experience, would it be unusual for division heads to be more concerned with immediate benefits for their own departments than for requirements of the organization as a whole?
2. What other kinds of behavior that were decisive in this case have you noticed in other situations?

F. Reporting: as a force in a situation
To what extent do events in this case seem to confirm the following general statement (which was made about newspaper reporters): "The reporter . . . is also a participant. He helps to shape the course of events. . . . At his worst . . . he can be an agent of disorder. . . . At his best, he can exert a creative influence. . . ."

G. Summary question
In your role as Colonel Wilson, sum up your plans for action toward long-term organizational aims at Hastings Depot.

Suggested Reading

Philip H. Thurston, *Systems and Procedures Responsibility* (a consideration of line and staff relationships and functions), Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, Boston, 1959.

CASE IX. A CRITIC CRITICIZED

The Unicorn Incident

By Friday, January 11, an avalanche of indignant letters was pouring into the editor's office. They were an immediate reaction to the poetry editor's review of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *The Unicorn and Other Poems.*

Here are a few sample quotations:

"Such terms as 'contempt,' 'illiterate,' 'foolish afflatus,' 'slovenly,' and 'miserable stuff' denote rabies rather than ratiocination."

"It leaves one with a sense of degradation for having read it, and printing it ill becomes the dignity of the *Saturday Review.* In the days of William Rose Benét one never had to be ashamed of the poetry page."

"The whole caliber of your magazine has been lowered by the official sanctioning of his tantrum."

"If a person of Mr. Ciardi's questionable maturity is to be allowed to choose the type of poetry to be published in *SR*, then you can cancel my subscription."

Suggestion for Getting into This Case

If you were the editor, you would be responsible for weighing such charges. And you would have to decide what, if anything, to say and do in response to the furore aroused by your poetry editor's latest review. Before making up your mind, here are some of the facts, feelings, and ideas that you might take into account.

Information on the Case as a Whole

Place and Time of the Incident

Place: Editor's office, the *Saturday Review* (often referred to as *SR*), New York City.

Time: Friday, January 11, 1957. (The controversial review was published in the issue dated January 12. But, in accordance with the practice of postdating, that issue had been mailed on the *preceding Tuesday*. By the 11th, hundreds of letters had already reached the editor.)

Events Leading up to the Unicorn Incident

Ciardi joins SR. In March, 1956, John Ciardi became poetry editor of *SR*.[1]

Pantheon publishes. A few months later, Anne Morrow Lindbergh's book, *The Unicorn and Other Poems*, was published by Pantheon. This book contained a selection of poems written between 1935 and 1955.

Ciardi decides. In explaining why he attacked the *Unicorn* as fiercely as he did, Ciardi said: "... I had long been waiting for the proper chance to do an out-and-out unfavorable review. I was in no sense lying in wait for Mrs. Lindbergh." [2]

Ciardi clears. Ciardi told Ray Walters (book review editor and member of the editorial board) and Norman Cousins (editor in chief) of his intention to write a highly unfavorable review of Mrs. Lindbergh's latest book. "Mr. Ciardi was told by Norman Cousins that so long as he was poetry editor he would continue to enjoy the same authority over his department possessed by other members of the staff. He would have direct access to the columns of the magazine. We would stand behind his right to unobstructed critical opinion; but this did not mean he could count on our automatic support for his views." [3]

Ciardi reviews the Unicorn. In September, 1956, Ciardi went to Italy, where he had a year's fellowship at the American Academy of Arts, in Rome. While there (and still as poetry editor of *SR*), he wrote the book review in question.

Norman Cousins makes a field trip. In December, 1956, Norman Cousins left for Johannesburg, South Africa, in order to make a firsthand study of race problems at that critical time and place. He did not return to his office until the second week in January, 1957.

[1] The previous poetry editor, William Rose Benét, had died in 1950. After that, Amy Loveman (associate editor of the magazine since its founding) temporarily added the duties of the poetry department to her other work for *SR*. She died in December, 1955.

[2] This quotation is taken from an article written after the Incident. But there is ample evidence that Ciardi's ideas, principles, and policies (as poetry editor) were clearly formulated before the Incident and were known to the editor of *SR*. For other quotations from Ciardi, see pp. 351–353 and 357–359 of this text.

[3] This quotation is taken from an article written by Norman Cousins after the Incident. But there is evidence that this policy had been formulated and applied before the Incident. For amplification of *SR* editorial policy and further quotations from that same article, see pp. 353–355 of this text.

Action by the editorial board. Ciardi's book review on the *Unicorn* reached *SR*'s office during the absence of the editor. But Norman Cousins read it in proof form. (In accordance with regular practice at *SR*, proofs of each forthcoming issue were mailed to the editor.) The editorial board also read Ciardi's book review in manuscript. Because they thought the author's title was "too emotional," they changed it from *The Slovenly Unicorn* to *A Close Look at the Unicorn*.[4]

The avalanche starts. Immediately after publication of the January 12 issue of *SR*, angry letters began to pour into the editor's office. The ratio of unfavorable to favorable opinions, expressed in these letters, was reportedly over a hundred to one.

Many of the letters were couched in violent language. Taken together they amounted to a bitter attack on John Ciardi as a person, a poet, an editor, and a critic. A few of these letters contained threats to cancel subscriptions to *SR*.

A small minority expressed agreement with John Ciardi's opinion, while deploring the violence of his language.

A still smaller minority expressed pleasure in the controversy.[5]

Excerpts from "A Close Look at the Unicorn"[6]

In the first paragraph, Ciardi refers to "Anne Morrow Lindbergh's great personal distinction," and to "the popularity of her six earlier volumes which made it clear from the start that her latest volume of verse, *The Unicorn and Other Poems*, would sell widely."

(In the second paragraph): ". . . as a reviewer not of Mrs. Lindbergh but of her poems I have, in duty, nothing but contempt to offer. I am compelled to believe that Mrs. Lindbergh has written an offensively bad book—inept, jingling, slovenly, illiterate even, and puffed up with the foolish afflatus of a stereotyped high-seriousness, that species of esthetic and human failure that will accept any shriek as a true high-C. If there is any judgment it must go by standards. I cannot apologize for this judgment. I believe that I can and must specify the particular badness of this sort of stuff."

In the third paragraph, Ciardi quotes from Mrs. Lindbergh's first poem and offers the following comments (among others): "I wince over the opening clash of cliché . . . stumble over the tortured and rhyme-forced inversion . . . and proceed from there to a dull nothingness, only to be brought up with a real grating of the nerve by the absurdity of line eight. . . ."

". . . I turn to the second poem and read the first two lines:

" 'Like birds in winter
You fed me;' "

[4] This change was made without consulting John Ciardi. It was consistent with editorial policy at *SR*. But board members made no alteration in the text of the review.

[5] For quotations, see pp. 359–362 of this text.

[6] The quotations given here are intended merely to provide a sampling of the ideas, method, tone, and language of this controversial review.

Mr. Ciardi criticizes the absence of a comma after "winter" and adds: "I am left to guess what I later find confirmed, that Mrs. Lindbergh does not understand English usage of the comma. But, more urgently, who is 'like birds in winter'?" (In his opinion, her meaning—made evident "four lines later"—is ungrammatically stated.)

"... I turn to the third piece.... By now I am become accustomed to mindlessness, as I am to Mrs. Lindbergh's way of lunging for rhymes, for any rhyme. ... [But] there still remains a small harvest of clichés." (He documents this charge by quoting six phrases.)

In commenting on "page eighteen," Mr. Ciardi's criticisms include the following:

1. Mrs. Lindbergh's meaning is obscure.
2. "Once again the grammar is faulty (as it is in poem after poem of those I sampled).... Am I to assume that Mrs. Lindbergh is actually illiterate? ..."
3. "... She is constantly in trouble with the simplest of rhymes ... and ... lacking first a sound grammatical sense and second anything like a poet's sense of words and their shades of meaning, she is defenseless against her rhyme-schemes and will commit any absurdity while entangled in her own harness.

"Nor is 'absurdity' too strong a word. I can certainly sense the human emotion that sends Mrs. Lindbergh to the writing, but I can only report that what emerges in the writing is low-grade poetry and low-grade humanity. As a person Mrs. Lindbergh must certainly have richer resources than these, but whatever those personal resources the fact remains that they simply do not make their way through bad writing. I must believe that the art of poetry is more important than Mrs. Lindbergh or than you or than me, and that bad observance of that art is an assault on one of the most enduring sanctions of the total human experience...."

(Mr. Ciardi then criticizes Mrs. Lindbergh's use of the word "clog.")

"... For a person of poetic pretensions to misuse language itself in so slovenly a way is certainly akin to Original Sin, and in the absence of the proper angel I must believe that it is the duty of anyone who cares for the garden to slam the gate in the face of the sinful and abusive...."

Notes on John Ciardi and Norman Cousins

John Ciardi. At the time of the Unicorn Incident, Ciardi was forty years old. He had a wife and three children. High points in his previous career include the following:

In 1938 he received his B.A., *magna cum laude,* from Tufts College; and his M.A. in 1939 from the University of Michigan.

1940–42 he was instructor in English, University of Kansas City. He published his first book, *Homeward to America,* in 1940.

1942–45 he served in the United States Army Air Corps and saw active service in the Pacific area as an aerial gunner.

1946–53 he was in the English department at Harvard University, first as an instructor, later as Briggs-Copeland Assistant Professor.

In 1953 he joined the English department at Rutgers University, becoming a professor in 1957.

Since 1955 he has been director of the Breadloaf Writers Conference in Middlebury College, Vermont.[7]

In 1956, John Ciardi won the *Prix de Rome* and went (on leave of absence) to study at the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

By 1957, Ciardi had published several books and many separate poems.[8]

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Norman Cousins: his organizational role, and some of his ideas. His dual role on the staff of SR. Norman Cousins became editor of *SR* in 1939. He also writes editorials and feature articles for *SR* on issues of national and world-wide importance. In preparation for this part of his job, he makes field trips (such as the one to Johannesburg, where he went in December, 1956).[9]

Policies for reviewers and staff members.[10] "A reviewer is selected on the basis of merit—familiarity with and comprehension of the subject—whether or not his opinion is necessarily that of the editor or, for that matter, the majority of readers.

"A department head can, and does, make policy, subject to approval by the editor.

"A reviewer is permitted free rein in his reviews provided the review is not offensive. The only changes made by the editor involve style rather than content. The editor, however, reserves the right to disagree with the reviewer and, if he feels it necessary, occasionally will write a statement to that effect." [11]

[7] The press release (dated March 29, 1956) announcing Ciardi's appointment as poetry editor on the *SR* staff included the statement: "He will retain both positions in addition to his new editorship." Partly as a matter of policy and partly for financial reasons, *SR* editors are not expected to spend all their time at the *SR* office, or on work for *SR*.

[8] A complete bibliography has been compiled by William White, *John Ciardi: A Bibliography*. For some of John Ciardi's ideas about writing and reviewing poetry and some of his policies as a department head, see pp. 357–359 of this text.

[9] For material on Norman Cousins's beliefs and activities, see *Who Speaks for Man?* and other material referred to in the suggested reading following this case.

In an *SR* editorial, published on March 7, 1959, Norman Cousins answered a question which his readers often asked of him: "How is it possible to operate a magazine from Madras or Hiroshima or Lambaréné? How can you get anything done when you spend so much of your time, quite literally, up in the air?"

Anyone who has experienced the difference between trying to work in a "land" office, and "up in the air" may be able to confirm Mr. Cousins's statement that "one hour in the sky office is the equivalent of about four hours on land, in terms of actual output." He also mentioned that airmail "bundles of work only two and a half days old from New York have been delivered to me at a jungle hospital in French Equatorial Africa. On another occasion, a postman on a bicycle met me coming out of a Japanese inn in Nagasaki and handed me page proofs of a forthcoming issue of *SR*."

[10] The first two paragraphs were written in 1957, for use in this case report, by Mr. Cousins's secretary, Miss Dawn Rylander. Although they had not previously been put in writing, they were well known to the *SR* staff. They had been communicated both orally and in action. Also, they were in the tradition of *SR*.

[11] This paragraph was written by Norman Cousins after the Unicorn Incident. But editorial dissents written earlier provide evidence that this policy was in effect before

Statements of principle. A man's "main job is to become supremely aware of and intimately involved in the great issues of his time."

"It is impossible to edit an independent journal of criticism if the contributors feel free only to mirror the pet ideas of the editor. Our job is to build up a roster of critics with integrity, authority, vigor, and a point of view." [12]

"The values which critics bring to their work may vary, but the reader is at least entitled to know what those values are, and how they are being applied. The editor of this magazine cannot pretend that we ourselves unfailingly pass this particular test; but at least there will be no Tzara hate of sense and contempt for logic in these pages if we can possibly help it."

"It is the job of the critic to call his shots as he sees them."

"Criticism is meaningless unless the yardstick of the critic is visible." [13]

Opinion of John Ciardi's qualifications as poetry editor. Mr. Cousins had a high opinion of Mr. Ciardi. He valued Ciardi's devotion to poetry and his extensive acquaintance with it. Among the reasons for selecting Ciardi as poetry editor had been his intelligence, integrity, vigor, conviction, devotion to poetry, and independence of mind. There had been no indication that Ciardi had altered in any of these respects.

Opinion of Ciardi's latest book review. Mr. Cousins thought that Ciardi's "critical yardstick for Mrs. Lindbergh's book was better adapted to the measurement of prose than poetry. By applying a rigorous test of meaning to each phrase, by insisting on precision in punctuation, by X-raying the intent of the author throughout, he has given literalness far more sovereignty than it needs or enjoys in verse. . . . The important questions about a poem are not limited to its word-by-word or line-by-line content or structure. Does anything come to life in a person when he reads a poem? Is there a door of awareness that comes unlocked? Are there rhythms and sounds no one of which may have particularized meaning but which say something in the aggregate and produce a response that could not be produced in any other way? It seems clear that Mr. Ciardi's reply to these questions in the case of Mrs. Lindbergh's book would be in the negative. Even so, it would have made for a stronger review if he had used these questions as the context for the full development of his critical opinions. This is not to say that structure and detail are irrelevant. But they are not the whole show either."

According to his own statement, Mr. Cousins could not "accept the adjective 'illiterate' when applied to Mrs. Lindbergh or her books. There are few living authors who are using the English language more sensitively or with more genuine appeal. There is in her books a respect for human responses to beauty and for the great connections between humankind and nature that gives her work rare

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that time. At the time of this case, the most recent dissent had appeared in *SR* on September 8, 1956. That editorial took issue with Hollis Alpert's criticism of the film "War and Peace."

[12] These principles were written down after January, 1957. But they had been reflected in action by Norman Cousins before then. In Cousins's opinion, one of the great issues today is: How can we "make the world safe for diversity"? Editorial, *SR*, Nov. 1, 1952.

[13] The last three principles are quoted from "Sense and Logic."

distinction and that earns her the gratitude and loyalty of her readers, as the present episode makes clear."

Background Material on the Saturday Review *(formerly the* Saturday Review of Literature*)*

The first issue of *SRL* was dated August 2, 1924.[14] Its first editor was Henry Seidel Canby. Cofounders were Amy Loveman, William Rose Benét (associate editors), and Christopher Morley (contributing editor). Their aim in starting *SRL* (after the literary supplement of the *New York Evening Post* was discontinued) was to "do something that had never been done successfully before, publish an independent weekly national literary review." At first, the new magazine was published by Time, Inc. But it soon became an independent publication. In its early days, *SRL* had "some 20,000 readers." On December 11, 1955, "the print order was 192,000."

In *SRL*'s first issue, "The leading editorial said that modern criticism must be like a modern university where one seeks Principles, but also works in laboratories of immediate experience amidst the vivid confusion of experiment. In one guise a graybeard philosopher searching for the Best, but also in the mood of youth, watching the three-ringed show under the great tent of Today—yet discriminating in both—that is the double function of criticism and this Review."

That conception of *SR*'s function has been maintained by staff members ever since.

Changes made after Norman Cousins became editor (in 1939) have included:

Setting up an editorial board. Henry Seidel Canby (then recently retired as editor) was persuaded to come back as chairman of the editorial board. At the time of the Unicorn Incident he was still chairman. Other members of the editorial board included Norman Cousins, J. R. Cominsky (the publisher), and all department heads (of whom John Ciardi was one.)[15]

Broadening the scope and changing the name. Departments had been added, so that by January, 1957, reviews were written not only about books but also on music, theater, radio-TV, science, travel, and features. There were also brain teasers such as Double-Crostics and Your Literary I.Q.

In order to reflect this broader coverage, the name of the magazine was changed, on January 1, 1952, to the *Saturday Review.*

Organizational climate at SR. In 1957, a member of the *SR* staff made the following comment: "There is a fine spirit of cooperation. The office space is small and crowded. And there is no coffee break. But people like to work here. There is a great deal of personal freedom."

The system for handling letters from SR *readers.* Norman Cousins's secretary

[14] This and other quotations in this subsection were taken from Norman Cousins's editorial, "Amy Loveman."

[15] Meetings of this board were held once a week. When Norman Cousins was away, he kept in touch by telephone and airmail. In his absence, Mr. Cominsky (publisher) served as acting editor, though he was not officially so titled.

It was not unusual for the board to change or to originate a title. (Most reviews were submitted without any title.)

was in charge of the department "Letters to the Editor." In *SR*, as in many other liberal magazines, it has been regular practice to publish letters from readers expressing a range of opinion, including sharp disagreement with contributors or editors.

Many of these letters are also answered by Norman Cousins himself.

Method of running the poetry department in Ciardi's absence. Before going away in September, 1956, Ciardi left a backlog of poems and reviews to be published in the poetry section during the coming months.

Joseph Slater (from the English department at Rutgers University) served in a capacity somewhere between "acting" poetry editor and assistant. He made a preliminary selection of poems and reviews received after Ciardi left. He then sent this selected material to the Poetry editor for final decision.

Notes on Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Her father was Dwight W. Morrow (1873–1931). For many years, he held positions of national and international importance, to which he was appointed (or confirmed) by Presidents Wilson, Coolidge, and Hoover. For example, as Ambassador to Mexico, Dwight Morrow is generally credited with having done much to improve relationships between the U.S.A. and Mexico.

In 1929, Anne Morrow married Charles A. Lindbergh (the first person to make a nonstop flight from New York to Paris).

The kidnapping and death of their first child aroused intense sympathy, not only in America but in many other countries. The unavoidable publicity connected with that tragedy doubtless intensified Mrs. Lindbergh's innate love of privacy and her strong dislike for publicity.

In addition to the selected poems, published in *The Unicorn,* Mrs. Lindbergh's published works include:

North to the Orient, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1935.
Listen! The Wind, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1938.
The Wave of the Future, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1940.
The Steep Ascent, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1944.
Gift from the Sea, Pantheon Press, 1955.

More Source Material

If you are interested in the literary and semantic issues raised by this case, you will naturally want to read all the published works of John Ciardi and Norman Cousins and other documentary material pertaining to this case. (For references to writings by Ciardi and Cousins, see the suggested reading at the end of this case. For "Letters to the Editor," see issues of *SR*, chiefly in January, February, and March, 1957.)

In a case report such as this, there is not room for more than a small sampling of the source material needed for full understanding of the situation described. But the following quotations may serve to give some of the ideas and something of the flavor, of which more can be found by extensive reading.

Statements of Opinion, Principles, and Policy: by John Ciardi [16]

Two kinds of poetry. In all general discussion of poetry today [two attitudes show up]. One attitude believes basically that poetry must avoid all "difficulty" ... and that the real purpose of art is "to breath forth *beauty*".... This attitude is expressed in "Genteel" [17] poetry, which leans heavily to the big abstractions loudly proclaimed, to bluebirds, to "yet I know's" and "do but commands," and to the wonder the wonder the wonder of being fifty in a vague suburban way.

Poets and readers [who take] the opposite attitude ... (I have already described it in some detail in some of my earlier articles ...) tend to find the output of the Genteel Tradition to be mushy and mindless. And there is the division: one group wants poetry pretty, vague, and easily effusive.... The other group wants poetry to be real, physical, and disciplined.... ("Duty," p. 54)

The poet's "morality." A basic difference between ... the world on one hand and poetry on the other ... is a difference of morality.... An awareness [of the poet's morality] will provide one way of measuring the essential difference between the work of a poet and that of a hobbyist in metrics. ("Morality," p. 12)

[The morality of poetry] is independent of [popular] morality.... [It is] anti-social only in short-range terms. It is *against* its contemporary (and ever-shifting) proprieties in order to be *for* what is longest and truest in man's awareness of himself. ("Morality," p. 13)

[The poet's central responsibility is to create] form. [In order to] give immortal shape to things, ... the maker must be uncompromisingly honest. ("Morality," p. 12)

Slovenliness I have always held to be the most contemptible of esthetic sins. ("Duty," p. 25)

The Christian tradition recognizes seven deadly sins ... [but] culture at large ... seems to be relatively unaware of Acedia ... the failure to pay sufficient attention to one's devotions. ("Morality," p. 13)

... Unless the poets hold counterfeit sentimentality in contempt, they become incapable of uttering their own devotions. ("Morality," p. 11)

To achieve ... ability to experience and to transmit experience in experienceable terms is the labor and devotion and the morality of the poet.... ("Morality," p. 14)

Only those poets who have most cherished the close fact of things and the discipline of their art have been able to make enduring statements of human values. Art is the mentality of human passion. Without mind enough, ... passion is mush. ("Morality," p. 14)

[16] The quotations in these paragraphs are taken from two articles by John Ciardi: "The Reviewer's Duty to Damn" and "The Morality of Poetry." (For complete references, see the suggested reading at the end of this case.) In this section, we identify the source of each quotation only by the words "Morality" and "Duty."

[17] "Poesy," "prop-room poesy," and "hobby verse" are other terms used by Ciardi to characterize the "output" which fails to meet his standards for poetry.

The ultimate sin of the mind is the failure to pay enough attention. ("Morality," p. 13)

[Using clichés is] immoral. [In art, it is] the central prostitution. . . . A cliché is not only a sinful slovenliness; it is an enemy of mind and hope, and it is not only a prostitution but a theft. ("Morality," p. 13)

[Poets must be] ruthlessly moral about language . . . without the poets to guard the language it would fall apart in the mouth. . . . When a language falls apart a nation is finished. ("Morality," p. 14)

High moral affirmation battered into bad rhyme and slovened out of shape in the name of rhetorical-seriousness is not poetry but esthetic immorality. It blurs our apprehension of life itself. Ignorance is no excuse for it, and sincere good intention cannot plead for it. It pretends to care, it may believe it does care, but it simply does not care enough. ("Morality," p. 34)

The reviewer's morality. A reviewer's duty [18] is to describe the book as accurately as he can.

[If a reviewer finds a book] bad, [he should review it with] contempt. I have only two reservations to make: the first is that the author's reputation be such that there is reasonable danger that the poems will be taken seriously; the second is that the more unfavorable a review happens to be, the more meticulously it must be documented. ("Duty," p. 54)

Mr. Ciardi has listed, as follows, his principles [19] for reviewing:

1. The reader deserves an honest opinion. If he doesn't deserve it give it to him anyhow.
2. No one who offers a book for sale is sacrosanct. . . . Having willingly subjected himself to judgment he must accept either blame or praise as it follows. If in doubt, assume that the book is signed by Anonymous.
3. Evaluation must be by stated principle. The reviewer's opinion is only as good as his methods.
4. A review without reference to the text is worthless.
5. Quotation without analysis of the material quoted is suspect.
6. If you cannot document a charge, pro or con, do not make it.
7. Poetry is more important than any one poet. Serve poetry.
8. Limitations of space often make it difficult and sometimes impossible to apply these principles as carefully as one would wish. No space limitation, however, is reason enough for forgetting that these principles exist. ("Duty," p. 55)

[18] Ciardi believed that honest reviewing is needed to save us from the danger of becoming a "mindless generation." ("Morality," p. 13) Much of the poetry and poetry reviewing published in the U. S. A. today tends to prevent people from "ever experiencing a real poem." ("Morality," p. 11) "Reviewers have tended to settle for gentle, meaningless noises. They have become readers without conviction. As reviewers their immoral (what else can I call it?) trimming to all winds has helped to pollute all reading tastes." ("Duty," p. 55)

[19] These are the principles referred to in the first two policy statements under "Ciardi's policies: as a department head."

Ciardi's policies: as a department head. By implication, Mr. Ciardi's first policy is to judge poetry, and to review it, on the basis of "stated principle."

I cannot, of course, control what the reviewer writes. I can and will "kill" reviews that ignore these principles, and I can and will call more and more upon the reviewers who observe them. ("Duty," p. 55)

I am trying to establish as a policy of this magazine that poetry is a serious, dignified, and disciplined human activity which is not to be debased in the name of a counterfeit sentimentality that will not bother to learn the fundamentals of its own art. ("Duty," p. 25)

When I took over as poetry editor of *SR* a year ago I began systematically to uproot Genteel poetry and to substitute whatever you want to call the other kind. I never imagined everyone would like it, but that remains my policy and it will be for as long as I am its poetry editor.[20] ("Duty," p. 54)

I had simply decided as basic policy that it was necessary for *SR* from time to time to publish a review in which a bad book was called bad in so many words and for carefully detailed reasons. . . . Mrs. Lindbergh's book . . . provided an excellent opportunity to define further that sort of pernicious poetry I mean to have none of in *SR*, and second . . . to offer an essential challenge to the whole pussy-footing process of book reviewing in our national mass-media. ("Duty," p. 54)

The fact is that reviewing in the United States seems to have succumbed to a mindless sort of approval of everything. . . . I have long been appalled by the national review standards (and the lack of standards) and I have long been determined to do something about them as poetry editor of *SR*. ("Duty," p. 54)

Quotations from "Letters to the Editor" [21]

Group 1. Strong disapproval

1. . . . It would be greatly appreciated by many subscribers if the poetry editorship were in the hands of a more balanced and temperate individual.

[20] In acting on this policy, Mr. Ciardi had sent back to contributors a number of poems which his predecessor, Amy Loveman, had accepted for publication. Some of them had already been paid for. He reportedly felt that to use all of them would heavily commit him to standards of selection which he could not approve.

[21] The following quotations represent a small sampling of four different kinds of response from *SR* readers:

1. *Strong disapproval* (of John Ciardi, his opinions, his writing, or of all three)
2. *Qualified agreement* (agreement with J. C.'s ideas, but disapproval of the manner and language of his review)
3. *Hearty approval* (of J. C.'s ideas and language)
4. *Pleasure in the controversy*

Some of the letters from which we quote were received during February and March. Many were published in *SR*'s "Letters to the Editor." As already mentioned, at first the ratio of unfavorable to favorable responses was "over a hundred to one." Then gradually, the ratio was reversed. The 1,500 letters received constituted "the biggest storm of reader protest in the thirty-three-year history of the *Saturday Review*." (Quoted from Norman Cousins's editorial "John Ciardi and the Readers.")

2. ... Ciardi ... is essentially an ill-bred boor ... a pompous Pontifex Maximus....

3. Your stew was nice and salty before he was ever mixed in.... If we are to be dosed with his kind of salt ... we know what we can do.

4. ... His attack was not *criticism*, it was boorish, unmannerly fault-finding. ... You have so many readers who have taken this to heart. One slip like Mr. Ciardi's can make a whole class of enemies for your splendid publication....

5. If one needed evidence ... that literary criticism is a lost art, one need look no further than the last copy of *SR*, the issue of January 12th....

6. ... What does Mr. Ciardi think is his role? Critic? ... What wolf is gnawing at him so that he must lash out in such savage assault? ...

7. ... I hope enough comments come in that we can get Ciardi out of that editorship.... This was not so much an affront to Mrs. Lindbergh as to the intelligent readers of the magazine....

8. Chuck Ciardi. Leave Lindbergh. Let's have more poetry. (This was a night letter.)

9. ... A "judgment" of poetry on principles cannot be expressed mainly or accurately in terms of the reviewer's visceral reactions....

A reviewer's function is to exercise and express judgment.... English words can accurately convey abstract and supportable judgments—and entirely different ones concern the speaker's feelings and have connotations about other people. To confuse them may confound understanding or violate standards of good taste. The review at hand did both....

10. ... Please get a new boy. This one is sour on the world—and himself, possibly.... When my subscription runs out, I'll wait until you clean out his office.

Other epithets used (about Ciardi, his writing, and "his kind" of poetry) by readers in Group 1 include: "boorish assault," "hysterical protest," "jabberwocky school of modern verse," "a Grand Inquisitor," "the grand high panjandrum," "sadistic, butcher shop trash . . . full of meaningless phrases," "egoistic palaver," "hooligan attack," "shoddy formula," "majestic, off-with-her-head paternalism," and "egotistical venom and sadistic immaturity."

Group 2. Qualified agreement

1. ... None of us in my corner objects to Mr. Ciardi's disliking *The Unicorn*, or any other book of poems, and writing an unfavorable review, if he so likes....

[But he] could have reviewed *The Unicorn* as critically as the faults of the book merited (though in his gleeful hopscotch through the book he ignored everything that did not fit into his premise) and brought down on himself no avalanche of shocked and angry opinion....

I think the reasons for our shock are mainly these: He says he is not reviewing Mrs. Lindbergh but her book, yet the manner in which he attacked the poems was highly personal.... The relish with which he delivers the verbal pasting is so obvious.... So, we have not a fair, unbiased, impersonal analysis of a book,

but the vehicle for Mr. Ciardi's accumulated hostility toward a kind of verse he doesn't care for. . . .

Is this advancing the cause of Poetry which Mr. Ciardi professes to hold above all other causes? Doesn't vituperation dilute the power of literary criticism? . . .

Another point: in this review Mr. Ciardi writes with such arrogance . . .

If one must say of any book, "It stinks," one at least precedes it with "In my opinion! . . ."

2. When the shouting is over . . . will Mr. Ciardi recognize the real issue of this controversy, to wit, can he, as an editor, live up to the dictums he has set as a critic? . . . It is my hope that Mr. Ciardi realizes that there are many sincerely disturbed readers who agree with him in principle, share his views on *The Unicorn*, but are still waiting for the clean, fresh, real poetry that he promised when he became editor. . . .

3. . . . I can agree with Mr. Ciardi's choice of Mrs. Lindbergh's poems for immolation in this cause, but must regret his use of the incendiary method. . . .

Group 3. Hearty approval

1. . . . I like a man with guts. . . . Even if he is wrong as hell (and I wouldn't know) I'm still for him. At least, he can say precisely what he means. In this day of fuzzy thinking and fuzzier writing, I think this is important. Ciardi can communicate. . . .

2. . . . Rather than give a merely surface discussion based on purely subjective tenets—as many critics do—Mr. Ciardi respects his readers sufficiently to justify his conclusions. . . . [He] has greatly improved the quality of *SR*, even in the selection of verse published in this magazine. . . .

3. (Letter to John Ciardi) . . . Permit me to extend a 15 year old's opinion. . . . I think that as a reviewer, you should most definitely say what you mean. . . . If any reviewer should happen to violently criticize anything I might write, may I remember what I said to you!

4. . . . I found Mr. Ciardi's review a useful elementary treatise on the esthetics of verse and poetry, and would appreciate an elaboration of it, directed toward the illumination of some of the masterpieces of poetry, old and new.

5. . . . I enjoyed somewhat Mrs. Lindbergh's poetry, and I did enjoy Mr. Ciardi's review. I believe I learned from both. . . . I confess to being one of that minority which likes strong language. . . . A generation ago it was called self-reliance. . . .

6. . . . Three cheers for a critic with courage to stand up for his convictions.

7. . . . I congratulate [Mr. Ciardi] for an intelligent, careful review of Mrs. Lindbergh's verses. . . . Should the magazine foster only the innocuous book reviewing that passes for criticism among the "appreciators" of literature, it would, I believe, have no significant position in American letters. . . .

8. . . . I was thrilled and stimulated by [John Ciardi's] integrity and adherence to the principles of book reviewing. His review was like a refreshing blast of pure air blowing through the murky smog of current literary criticism.

9. Hurrah for Honest John.

Cheers for an intelligent, honest, hard-hitting critic and a good poet—a rare combination—like John Ciardi, and also for *SR* which has the gumption to get him and keep him—I hope. . . .

10. Mr. Ciardi is, of course, right. Mrs. Lindbergh's poetry is slovenly. . . . Mr. Ciardi's review is a milestone in literary criticism. . . .

11. . . . I've found that I can depend on *SR* for an honest review, regardless of whether the publisher happens to carry heavy advertising in your pages. . . . Thus *SR* has come to represent to our family a literary review with integrity. . . .

12. . . . It is critics like Ciardi, and publications like *SR*, which give us a breath of revitalizing cool air in the vitiating atmosphere of almost total mediocrity which stifles us today.

Other letters, agreeing with Mr. Ciardi's statements about contemporary reviewing and about "Genteel" poetry, contained the following epithets: "mealy-mouthed critics," "sheep-like critics," "namby-pamby criticism," "this contemporary inferno of images and shapes obfuscated by rank commercialism," "back-scratching, mealy-mouthed, jacket-blurb reviewing," "imbecilic love yelps . . . poetically illiterate discards."

Group 4. Pleasure in the controversy

1. Anyway, it's been a good fire, and I hope the phoenix rises for us peasants.

2. I have read with greatest relish for the past few weeks the shouts of pain and anger from outraged nice old ladies, unrepentant young poets, and flustered editors. . . . If you will promise to produce one show per year as good as the Ciardi-Lindbergh donnybrook, I will subscribe to *SR* forever. . . .

3. . . . The Ciardi-Lindbergh controversy in print, has been for me the most exciting and perhaps the most revealing one that has received space in your "Letters to the Editor." . . .

* * * * * *

Questions concerning Immediate Action

If you were the editor of *SR*, caught up in the aftermath of the Unicorn Incident, what might you do?

Or perhaps you feel that anyone who doesn't know John Ciardi intimately, and who has no experience in running a magazine, isn't in a position to decide how that Incident could most effectively be handled. If you think that, would you be interested in—

1. Formulating the issue—or issues—for immediate action by Norman Cousins, in January, 1957?

2. Clarifying what seems to be at stake here, not only in the short run, but also in the long run?

Suggestions for Re-viewing This Case

What might be learned from this case by considering its implications for—

Organizational principles and policies
Writing, reading, criticizing, and appreciating literature
Language as a form of interaction

Organizational Issues

I. *Management by shared objectives*
  A. What information given in the preceding report suggests that "management by objectives" may have been both policy and practice at *SR* (during the time span of this case)?
  B. What are some of the reasons why co-action on shared objectives might be especially appropriate and useful in an organization like *SR*?

II. *Managerial functions*
  A. The following is a list of accepted management functions: planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, delegating, and controlling. How many of these functions need to be carried out by the editor in chief of a magazine or a newspaper?
  B. *Delegating.* What does this case report tell us about Norman Cousins's policy and practice in regard to delegating authority and responsibility?

III. *Organization policy*
  A. How would you summarize—
    1. Norman Cousins's policies, as editor (in chief)? From what you know about his actions, how well do they match his policy statements?
    2. John Ciardi's policies, as a department head?
  B. Do all the statements cited as policies in this case fit specifications for organization policies? If not, which statements do you think fail to qualify, and in what respects?

IV. *Employee development*
  From what you know about the situation at *SR* in 1957, what policies and practices were in effect that would tend to develop administrative and executive capacities in staff members?

V. *Committee work*
  A. In your opinion, what advantages, and disadvantages, may be expected when important decisions are made by a committee (such as *SR*'s editorial board)?
  B. When a top-level committee shares responsibility for major decisions, what are some of the precautions that can reduce disadvantages and risks?

VI. *Clearing—as organizational practice*
  A. In this case, what action—by whom—illustrates the organizational practice of clearing?
  B. What advantages—for an organization, and for an individual—are illustrated by advance clearing as carried out in this case?

VII. *On "acting" status*
  A. What does it take to meet the responsibilities that go with an acting status?
  B. What are some of the differences between (1) acting for an organizational superior *who is temporarily absent,* and (2) being given acting status *as an interim appointment,* in a position which is temporarily vacant?

VIII. *Membership*
   A. What actions, by which participants in this case, reflect awareness that the behavior of an organizational member is to some extent predetermined by existing policies and procedures?

IX. *Summary question*
   How would you sum up your opinion on the organizational issues involved in this case?

Literary Issues

Here are a few of the literary questions raised by the Unicorn Incident:

I. *Principles for poets*
   A. In your opinion, is there such a thing as the poet's morality? If so, what principles should this esthetic code affirm?

II. *Standards for judging contemporary poetry*
   A. How, if at all, can one measure the worth of contemporary poetry?

III. *Suggestions for esthetic appreciation*
   A. To what extent do the following statements represent your opinion:
      1. "... To read a poem, come prepared for delight.... If you mean to enjoy the poem as a poem, stop crossexamining it, stop trying to force it to 'make sense.' The poem *is* sense...."
      2. "... Understanding the rational surfaces of the poem ... may point a direction toward the poem. The poem is never experienced, however, until it is felt in the same complex of mind and nerve from which it arose—the subconscious.... To substitute rational analysis for the larger context of the subconscious is to reject the poem."

IV. *Book reviewing: principles, policies, and rules*
   A. Principles
      1. What seem to you the most important points of agreement and difference in the opinions expressed by Norman Cousins, John Ciardi, and readers of *SR* as to the *reviewer's duty honestly to write what he thinks?*
      2. Judging from reviews written by John Ciardi, to what extent do you think he applies the principles which he professes as a book reviewer? (See p. 358 for statements of principle by Ciardi.)
   B. Policies
      1. Why do you agree—or disagree—with the following editorial policies:
         a. Respect each reviewer's right to express his opinion. Do not tamper with the text of his review. But select reviews which reflect your own principles.
         b. Publish reviews which evidently express honest, intelligent, and informed opinions. Do not tamper with the text. But reserve the right to publish a dissenting opinion.
   C. Rules
      1. Which of the following rules for reviewing most nearly represents your opinion, and why?

a. [In many years of book reviewing] "I have been guided by only one principle: take the good for granted, which usually exceeds the ill, and hit as hard as I can the author's errors of fact and judgment. . . . Most reviewing should be negative criticism. Books that merit 'rave reviews' are few and rare." [22]

b. ". . . it seems to me that one of the basic rules of criticism is that one writes one's opinions, especially if they are unfavorable, with *respect* for the human being who has done the writing. *With* that basis one may criticize as freely as one likes. *Without* it, one runs the danger of irresponsibility."

V. *Summary question*

A. If you were to select one principle for first place in an artist's code of ethics, what would it be? And why?

Language as a Form of Interaction

I. *Cooperation and conflict*

A. How does this case illustrate the following general proposition: "The basic ethical assumption of semantics . . . is that co-operation is preferable to conflict." [23]

B. What evidence do you find in this case report which suggests that not everyone agrees with that general idea?

C. Whatever your opinion, how strong a case can you make in support of the idea that, for a liberal paper or magazine, controversial articles—

1. May be an effective means to set readers thinking about important issues

2. May also be commercially profitable

II. *Strong language*

A. On what grounds (if any) might one justify, in a case like this one, a certain amount of exaggeration and oversimplification; for instance, as expressed in words like: "mindless," "illiterate," "poetic junk," and "imbecilic love yelps"?

B. How might one account for the fact that, in this situation, some expressions which might have acted as "stoppers" [24] apparently did not have that effect?

III. *On labeling*

A. How many labels do you find in "Letters to the Editor"? (Did you classify any of these as stoppers?)

B. From what you know of Norman Cousins and of John Ciardi, what do you think they would say about the suitability of labeling?

IV. *On using clichés*

A. In what important respects does a cliché differ from a mere quotation?

[22] This paragraph and the one following are taken from "Letters to the Editor."

[23] S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action.*

[24] For an explanation of this term, see Irving J. Lee, *How to Talk with People,* pp. 93 ff., or consult our index for page reference to an explanation.

B. In your opinion, what are some of the advantages (if any) and disadvantages of using clichés?

C. If you were to find an expression that you classify as a cliché in John Ciardi's language, would you regard it as inexcusable? Why, or why not?

V. *Precision in language*

A. What other words might be substituted for some of the labels or clichés used in this case, so that the language would more closely match objectively verifiable facts?

B. In considering the desirability of trying for precision in language, how important do you think it is whether communication is undertaken—

1. In writing, or orally
2. By an organizational member who speaks (or writes) in a representative capacity and to a large audience, or by an individual communicating with someone whom he knows intimately?

VI. *Manner and tone in communication*

A. What are some of the opinions, expressed by participants in this case situation, on manner and tone as factors which communicate meaning?

B. What are some of the expressions used by John Ciardi (in the *Unicorn* review and in other writings) which may have given ground to the charge that he was "arrogant"?

C. Do you interpret them in that way? Or do you think they are associated with some other trait or motive?

D. What is your opinion on the question as to whether some degree of exaggeration and an emotional manner are likely to increase or decrease the effectiveness of communication about ideas?

VII. *General Semantics*

Cite some of the language used in this case which, in your opinion, illustrates the following ideas:

A. "The meanings of words are *not* in the words; they are in *us*."

B. "No word ever has exactly the same meaning twice."

C. Words are pointers. Part of their meaning lies in what they point toward in the world of physical facts. This is what they *denote*. Another kind of meaning is what a word *connotes*. This is what it points to inside the mind.[25]

VIII. *Interpreting meaning in context*

On page 364, III A, we quoted some suggestions on how to appreciate a poem.

A. Did you know that we were quoting from John Ciardi's article, "What Does It Take to Enjoy a Poem"? (*SR*, December 10, 1949) And do you find those comments incompatible with other things that he wrote in 1957? Why, or why not?

B. How is your opinion on the preceding question affected by—

1. Ciardi's distinction between "poetry" and "poesy" (made in the 1949 article and in other writings before and after 1957) and
2. The fact that his plea for "experiencing" verse (by trying to share

[25] The first two statements are direct quotations from Hayakawa, *op. cit.*, pp. 292 and 60. The third is adapted from the same book, p. 58.

the author's mood and purpose) was explicitly limited to what he considers as "poetry"?

C. In appraising Ciardi's use of language, how much difference does it make to you that he is a poet—by vocation—as well as a teacher, and an editor, by profession?

D. What light does this case throw on generally accepted meanings (in the U.S.A. today) of the words "critic" and "criticize"?

E. Would you agree that people in the U.S.A. nowadays seem extremely sensitive about negative criticism? If so, what seems to you accountable?

IX. *Partisanship*

A. What actions by any persons involved in this case seem to you to express an attitude of partisanship?

B. To what extent do you agree with the general proposition that when a person feels "nothing but contempt" for the performance of another person, he is not in the best possible position to criticize it? (We here use the term criticize in the broad sense, as forming or expressing an opinion as to merits, as well as weaknesses.)

X. *Summary questions*

1. How would you summarize what this case shows about habits and skills of language as a form of interaction?
2. How would you summarize the material that you find in this case on the vital issue: How can we live, productively, with diversity?

(Norman Cousins has worded it and worked on it as: How shall we "make the world safe for diversity"? Mary Follett asked: How shall we make "diversity *do* something for us"?)

Suggested Reading

The amount of reading that you want to do in connection with this case will naturally depend on the nature and degree of your interest.

If you would like to read just enough to fill in the verbal context of some quotations taken from articles by Ciardi and Cousins, you'll find references in the short reading list below. The second list gives suggestions for wider reading.

Short Reading List

1. John Ciardi, "A Close Look at the Unicorn," *SR*, Jan. 12, 1957.

2. Norman Cousins, "John Ciardi and the Readers," *SR*, Feb. 16, 1957.

3. John Ciardi, "The Reviewer's Duty to Damn: A Letter to an Avalanche," *SR*, Feb. 16, 1957.

4. John Ciardi, "The Morality of Poetry: Devotion and Discipline vs. The Pushbutton," *SR*, Mar. 30, 1957.

5. "Letters to the Editor" (see issues of *SR*, especially for February, March, and April, 1957).

A More Comprehensive Reading List

1. For a complete list of all publications by John Ciardi up to March, 1959, see William White, *John Ciardi: A Bibliography*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1959. (The discussion plan for this case, to be published by the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., gives an annotated list of nineteen articles by Ciardi—published in *SR*—which seem to us specially worth reading in connection with this case.)

2. Writings of Norman Cousins

   a. Books:

   (1) *Modern Man Is Obsolete*, The Viking Press, Inc., New York, 1945.

   (2) *Who Speaks for Man*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1953.

   (3) *In God We Trust*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1958.

   b. Articles published in SR:

   (1) "The Morning After," Nov. 1, 1952.

   (2) "Amy Loveman," Dec. 24, 1955.

   (3) "Sense and Logic," June 2, 1956.

   (4) "Editorial Dissent," Sept. 8, 1956.

   (5) "Checklist of Enemies," July 27, 1957.

   (6) "A 'Sensitive' Subject," Nov. 25, 1957.

   (7) "Notes on an Anniversary," Mar. 7, 1959.

   (8) "An Address in Moscow," July 25, 1959.

3. Geoffrey Wagner, "The Decline of Book Reviewing," *The American Scholar*, Winter, 1956–1957.

CASE X. "CUT OFF?"[1]

The Christmas Party Incident

Mrs. Jensen (Assistant Director of Nursing Service) is at her desk, busily checking time slips. She gives no sign of noticing that Mrs. Ryan (Assistant Director of Nursing Education) has entered the room.

MRS. RYAN (cheerfully): Good morning, Mrs. Jensen. Coming to the Christmas party tonight?

MRS. JENSEN: I am *not!* (in a tone of reproach) I've been meaning to call you, Mrs. Ryan, to tell you how hurt I am. I wasn't even asked to contribute to Helen's gift.

MRS. RYAN: Gee, Mrs. Jensen. I didn't mean to hurt you. I've never been a collector before. I just figured you'd be making your own collection, with your own service group.

MRS. JENSEN: Why should we? We've *always* been included with the instructors. Now, just because they've separated Education from Service—well, I certainly never expected it would carry through *socially*, too.

MRS. RYAN: It was never meant to. Why should it? That's why you were invited to Helen's party. Come on, now. Don't you want to come?

MRS. JENSEN: No. I just couldn't bring myself to do it. You people in the school *have cut me right off!* And I *don't* think it's nice. I'm as much a member

[1] All the information given in the following report was supplied by Mrs. Marita Tribou.

of the faculty as Miss Sweeney is. Don't I teach ward administration to the seniors? And besides—how am I supposed to know what's going on in the school? I tell you, Mrs. Ryan, *they ought to put me back on!*

MRS. RYAN: But, Mrs. Jensen . . .

MRS. JENSEN (launching into a flood of grievances): This separation is *not* good at all. I've had nothing but problems since it happened. I've been hurt so many times. . . .

* * * * * *

Suggestion for Analyzing This Case

Does this sound like a case of hurt feelings, and nothing more?

In order to answer that question intelligently, you need to know something about the situation in which the Christmas Party Incident occurred. As you read about it, you might be interested to ask yourself: "Suppose I were in Mrs. Ryan's position (as Assistant Director, Nursing Education), what might I do about this *Incident?* And what further action—if any—might I take in this *case?*"

Information on the Case as a Whole

Time: Date of the Christmas Party Incident, December 20, 1957.

Place: Memorial Hospital, Bay City, Massachusetts.

About the hospital. Memorial Hospital has a capacity of approximately three hundred beds. Enrollment in the School of Nursing is usually between seventy and eighty students. At the time of the Incident, it is expected that the school will soon receive full accreditation from the National League for Nursing.

An organizational change. About five months before the Christmas Party Incident, an organizational change (which had been in the making for some time) was made official. Nursing Service and Nursing Education, which had been operating jointly for many years, were formally set up as "separate but coordinated units." Each unit now has its own constitution [2] and its own committee structure.

Notes on key people. "Helen" is *Miss Peterson.* Her official title is: Director of Nursing Service and Nursing Education. Staff members usually call her Helen. When a more formal title seems appropriate, they refer to her as the Director, or the Director of Nursing. (She was promoted to her present position three years ago. At that time, she stipulated that she must have two assistants. Mrs. Jensen and Mrs. Ryan were promoted to those positions.)

Head nurses and staff nurses say of Miss Peterson that she is "most kind and fair." Of herself she has said that she finds it difficult to discipline students, adding, "I'm afraid I'm as soft as a grape."

Mrs. Jensen's official title is Assistant Director of Nursing Service. She usually refers to herself as the Assistant Director of Nursing, or the Assistant Director.

[2] Both constitutions were drawn up hastily as part of the preparations for accreditation. Mrs. Ryan (who had final responsibility for the constitution for nursing education) expressed dissatisfaction because "there wasn't time to do a decent job."

Her job description includes the statements: "Assumes the responsibilities of the Director of Nursing Service in her absence," and "Assumes responsibility of administration of the hospital on week-end coverage." (In other words, Mrs. Jensen is "Acting" Director of Nursing Service on week ends.) (See page 372 for indications of a misunderstanding by Mrs. Jensen as to her "acting" status.)

Personnel in nursing service have sometimes said that they found Mrs. Jensen somewhat autocratic as a supervisor. But recently Mrs. Jensen has said that modern times call for democratic practices in administration.

Mrs. Jensen has often expressed hurt feelings.

Mrs. Ryan's official title is Assistant Director of Nursing Education. She usually refers to herself as Educational Director. Other people also use that title in speaking of her. (Her job description states: "Assumes responsibility for the school in the director's absence.")

Mrs. Ryan is well liked by staff members. She has said of herself that when she thinks anyone is attempting to exercise control over anything that comes within the scope of her authority, she can be "downright ornery and difficult."

Personal relationships. All three of these women have been on friendly terms (except as indicated in the Incident). But the relationship between Miss Peterson and Mrs. Jensen is much longer and warmer than that between either of them and Mrs. Ryan (who joined the hospital staff seven years ago).

Miss Peterson and Mrs. Jensen were classmates in the school of nursing at this hospital, from which they graduated twenty-five years ago. Most of the time since then they have worked together in this hospital. Mrs. Jensen has advanced in organizational status step by step behind Miss Peterson. She has apparently taken it for granted that if Miss Peterson should leave her present position, while she (Mrs. Jensen) was still under the retirement age, she would succeed Miss Peterson as Director. (Miss Peterson was assistant to the former director. Mrs. Jensen's job description contains the statement: "May advance to Director of Nursing.")

Formal education and faculty status. Mrs. Ryan has a B.S. and an M.S. in education.

Miss Peterson has a B.S. in nursing and is working toward her M.S. Mrs. Jensen has taken some of the university courses needed for her B.S. degree.

As Director of the School, Miss Peterson is head of the faculty. But actually she serves more nearly as honorary head. Mrs. Ryan is chairman of the curriculum committee, and (among other duties) is responsible for preparing "a master curriculum plan for each class, for assisting each instructor in planning her course," and for teaching a number of courses.

For many years, Mrs. Jensen was a member of the faculty. This was during the period when nursing service and nursing education operated jointly, under the title: The Faculty Organization of the Memorial Hospital. Mrs. Jensen was on the executive committee (the chief decision-making body) in that faculty. And of the seven standing committees by which it functioned, she was chairman of two and a member of three others. Now that Service and Education are separate units, no member in either unit is a member of any full committee [3] in

[3] Head nurses serve on the Faculty *Sub*committee for Medical and Surgical Clinical Teaching.

the other unit (though naturally Miss Peterson supervises and serves on committees in both units).

Facts and Feelings about Mrs. Jensen's Major Grievance

Mrs. Jensen's role as an instructor. Mrs. Jensen's job description contains the statement: "Teach ward administration to senior students." In each of the last three years (including this year), Mrs. Jensen has given about six hours of classroom instruction to seniors. Last year she also supervised four seniors who took the elective course in the practice of ward administration. This year, that course has not been chosen by any student.

(It is chiefly on the basis of this teaching—and supervision—that Mrs. Jensen claims to be "a part-time instructor," [4] and therefore to be "as much a member of the faculty as Miss Sweeney is.")

What about Miss Sweeney? Miss Sweeney, now twenty-four years old, was recently appointed as instructor-supervisor in the Outpatient Department. She is enrolled in a nearby college and has earned six college credits since her graduation from nursing school. She is not held responsible for any "formal instruction." But she does all the clinical teaching in OPD (the Outpatient Department). As a part-time instructor, she ranks as a faculty member. Mrs. Ryan and other members of the faculty staff agree that Miss Sweeney has considerable competence and a promising future as a teacher and supervisor of student nurses.

Some of Mrs. Jensen's other responsibilities. Here are some excerpts from Mrs. Jensen's job description:

"*Professional Experience*" No. 2: "Must have a comprehensive knowledge of general nursing theory and practice. . . . Must also have a familiarity with the most recent trends in nursing."

"*Abilities and Characteristics*" No. 4: "Initiative and judgment in determining needs of nursing program, selecting adequately trained personnel . . ."

"*Functions* A: Frequent"—No. 6: "Interviews applicants for nursing service positions and evaluates their qualifications.

B: Periodic"—No. 1: "Teaches ward administration to senior students." . . . No. 3: "Is responsible for inservice program for professional and nonprofessional personnel." . . . No. 11: "Participates in establishing criteria for nursing care and continuously reviews existing procedures in the light of the best available standards." . . . No. 13: "Participates in studies to improve patient care."

Mrs. Jensen feels that since she can no longer attend faculty meetings, she is cut off from information and ideas that she needs in order effectively to supervise and teach nurses (both students and graduates) and to evaluate and select graduates who apply for nursing positions.

Apparently she feels particularly aggrieved at not being invited to attend meet-

[4] In the recently drawn up constitution for Nursing Education, the list of positions which entitle a person to rank as a member of "the faculty organization" includes "part-time instructors." But there has been no clarification (either in writing or orally) as to what kind of teaching or how much teaching entitles a person to be classified as a part-time instructor.

ings of the faculty inservice program. She has heard many favorable comments about recent speakers on such topics as "Guidance" and "Tests and Measurements." There is nothing in the new constitutions which would prevent a member of either unit from attending meetings of the other unit—as a guest. But it has not occurred to Mrs. Ryan to invite anyone from Nursing Service to attend meetings on topics which she regards as highly technical, and of interest only to faculty members.

In speaking to Mrs. Ryan about these meetings, Mrs. Jensen said: "You know I'm deeply interested in education. And it seems to me I should have been asked to hear outside speakers."

Why Does Mrs. Jensen Keep the Time Slips?

As indicated in the Christmas Party Incident, Mrs. Jensen also keeps track of the time slips for student nurses. This responsibility is not specifically listed in her current job description. But she has done it for many years. It consists in keeping a record of days when student nurses are on duty (either on ward duty or attending classes) and of absences owing to illness.

A Related Grievance: "Nobody Tells Me Anything"

Mrs. Jensen has asserted that lack of information about the school makes it impossible for her to meet all her responsibilities as "acting" director when Miss Peterson is away.

According to her job description, Mrs. Jensen "assumes the responsibilities of the Director of Nursing Service in her absence." According to the job description of the Assistant Director of Nursing Education, Mrs. Ryan "assumes responsibility for *the school* in the director's absence." [our emphasis]

When acting as a Director, Mrs. Jensen is expected to make a daily report to the Hospital Administrator. And apparently she feels that she should "know all about the School," as well as about Nursing Service. But Mrs. Ryan has not felt it necessary to keep Mrs. Jensen informed about everything that happens in the School.

For example, about a year ago, Miss Peterson went on a two-week vacation. Before she left, she told Mrs. Jensen to use her own judgment concerning all "hospital problems." (She also told Mrs. Ryan to handle all "School matters.")

The following incident (as told by Mrs. Ryan) occurred on the Monday after Miss Peterson's departure.

The Dale incident. As Mrs. Ryan was about to begin her working day, she met Miss Dale (a student nurse) at the front door of the nurses' residence. (The school is in the same building.) Miss Dale said she had decided to leave training. They discussed the matter briefly. Mrs. Ryan suggested that Miss Dale go home overnight and talk the whole matter over carefully with her parents. If she should change her mind, she could return to the school the next day. But she should be back not later than 1 P.M., so that she would not miss an important lecture scheduled to be given from one to three by a visiting medical authority. If she did *not* return by 1 P.M. on the next day, it would be understood that she had left training. But in that case, she should write to Miss Peterson, informing her of the decision.

Miss Dale did not return.

On Tuesday afternoon, Mrs. Ryan's schedule kept her busy until four o'clock. Immediately after that she went to the nursing office on an errand. While she was there, Mrs. Jensen asked her to go into Miss Peterson's office. In the privacy of that room, Mrs. Jensen said:

Mrs. Ryan, you should have referred Miss Dale to me. Or at least you should have informed me of her intent to leave. As it was, I found out indirectly at lunch.

MRS. RYAN: But Miss Dale's resignation did not become official till one o'clock today. I had every intention of telling you and Mr. Laurence[5] as soon as possible. But I've been in class till just now.

MRS. JENSEN: It's not your place to tell Mr. Laurence. That's my responsibility when Miss Peterson is away. You should report these things to me directly.

Mrs. Ryan replied that Miss Peterson had left her in charge of School affairs and that she intended to handle them in her own way until Miss Peterson returned. Then, if Miss Peterson required her to report everything to Mrs. Jensen, she would offer her resignation.

After this interchange, Mrs. Ryan left the nursing office. On returning to her own office, she called the Hospital Administrator and told him that Miss Dale had officially left training as of 1 P.M. that day. She added that Mrs. Jensen had been upset because she had not been informed about it (except through the grapevine) until 4:20.

Mr. Laurence thanked her for letting him know.

When Miss Peterson returned, neither she nor the Administrator directly referred to the Dale incident. But the Administrator invited Mrs. Ryan to attend the next meeting of department heads, saying that he wanted to clarify certain organizational relationships. At the beginning of the meeting (at which Mrs. Jensen and Miss Peterson were also present) he explained to the group that from now on both Mrs. Ryan and Mrs. Jensen would be members of that committee, since Mrs. Ryan was officially "Head of the School," in Miss Peterson's absence, just as Mrs. Jensen was officially "Head of Nursing Service," in Miss Peterson's absence. (Mrs. Jensen had not previously been a member of that committee, but when Miss Peterson was busy or away, Mrs. Jensen had attended these committee meetings, at Miss Peterson's request.)

At the time of the Incident given as the start of this case report, Mrs. Jensen made the following statement to Mrs. Ryan: "When Helen is away, I am responsible for reporting to the Hospital Administrator. But nobody tells me anything. If he were to ask me about the school, I'd feel like a fool because I would have nothing to say. Furthermore, as the Assistant Director of Nursing, I should be kept informed as to what is going on at the School."

To this Mrs. Ryan replied: "If the Hospital Administrator were to ask me questions about Nursing Service, I wouldn't feel like a fool. I'd just tell him to ask you. Why don't you tell him the same thing—to ask me if he wants to know anything about the school? Or, if you'd rather, you could ask me directly and then tell him that if he wants more details he could contact me."

[5] Mr. Laurence was the Hospital Administrator at that time.

A Third Grievance: the New Telephone Listing and Facilities

Recently, the PBX telephone system in Memorial Hospital was converted to the dial system. When Mrs. Jensen saw the mimeographed listing of telephone numbers (the day before the change was to be put into effect), she found that neither her name nor her official title was listed. Instead, the number of the telephone on her desk (231) was listed twice, under "Nursing Office" and under "School of Nursing—Director." But under "School of Nursing," a separate number (306) was listed with the title "Assistant Director." In other words, Mrs. Ryan was to have a private line and a separate listing, while she (Mrs. Jensen) would have neither.[6]

The telephone incident. Apparently acting on the assumption that she was *the* Assistant Director, Mrs. Jensen told the installer that number 306 had been mistakenly assigned to Mrs. Ryan and should be given to her. The installer, *taking her statement as a fact and her request as an official order,* made the necessary changes so that number 306 became Mrs. Jensen's private line.

This change automatically disconnected Mrs. Ryan's private telephone. She could neither make nor receive calls except over the central telephone in the nurses' residence (where the school and Mrs. Ryan's office are located).

Mrs. Ryan spoke to the Assistant Administrator (who was supervising the changeover to the dial system). She mentioned the fact that some of her telephone conversations about student nurses were of a confidential nature. The Assistant Administrator then directed that line 306 should be given to Mrs. Ryan, as originally planned. After that, a number of calls intended for Mrs. Jensen came to Mrs. Ryan's office instead.

A Fourth Grievance: "Helen Has Lost All Interest in Nursing Service"

Mrs. Jensen supported that charge by mentioning that Miss Peterson no longer attended meetings for head nurses and supervisors. Among the facts that she did not mention were these: There was a conflict of meetings, since Mrs. Jensen—without consulting anyone—had changed the day on which head nurses and supervisors met. (She had made this change in order to avoid a conflict with a university course she was taking.) The conflict in the hospital schedule was with a weekly meeting of a faculty committee. (The schedule for all faculty meetings had been planned far in advance, and in relation to teaching schedules.) In view of the impending accreditation of the school, Miss Peterson felt responsible for keeping in close touch with decisions and actions taken by the faculty.

What Is the Immediate Issue? And What Is at Stake Here?

If you were in Mrs. Ryan's organizational position, how might you define the issue (or issues) for immediate action?

[6] Before the changeover, the telephone on Mrs. Jensen's desk had been labeled "Nursing Office" at the switchboard, and the telephone on Mrs. Ryan's desk had been labeled "Mrs. Ryan." But, presumably because the identification was only at the switchboard, Mrs. Jensen either did not know about it or did not resent it. Anyway, she never mentioned the matter until the PBX system was installed.

Aside from questions that could be answered (in words or action) during the next few minutes and hours, what important features of the *hospital situation as a whole* would be affected by action taken (or not taken) on any of Mrs. Jensen's complaints?

For instance, would you say that the following questions are worth looking into?

1. What flaws in the situation—if any—have been highlighted by Mrs. Jensen's recital of grievances? (How about the need for coordination? How might Mrs. Jensen's job description be improved?)
2. Could the Assistant Director of Nursing Education appropriately take action to remove some of Mrs. Jensen's grounds for dissatisfaction? (For example, is there any way in which Mrs. Ryan and other faculty members might appropriately recognize Mrs. Jensen's activity and interest in teaching?)
3. Do some of Mrs. Jensen's complaints concern matters that should be discussed with the Director? (If so, which complaints? And would it be appropriate for the Assistant Director of Nursing Education to make some recommendations?)

Immediate Decisions: What Might a Person in Mrs. Ryan's Position Do about It?

However you formulate the issue(s), what do you think a person in Mrs. Ryan's role might do, immediately after the Christmas Party Incident and later, in trying to correct what seems to be accountable for difficulties in this situation?

Some General Questions

On Situational Analysis

If you were asked to classify this case, in view of observable difficulties, what would you say? (For example, would you diagnose it as primarily "a case of personality problems"? Or would you call it a "case of organizational difficulties"? Or, stressing the time factor, might you ticket it as a set of "transition problems"? Or would you diagnose it in some other way?)

Responsibility for Personnel Policies

To what extent does this case seem to confirm the general proposition that administering personnel policies is an important responsibility of line management?

Communication: Barriers and Channels

1. What indications did you see in this case that participants were aware of any communication barrier?
2. What action taken by participants would you interpret as an effort to overcome or get around a communication barrier?

Coordination

1. To what extent do you agree that the education of a registered nurse consists of *two integrally related elements:* learning medical theory and acquiring clinical experience?

2. Do you know of other hospitals in which effective coordination between Nursing Service and Nursing Education has been difficult but has been achieved? If so, what was done?

3. In relation to possibilities for further action in this case, discuss the following general statement:

To coordinate is to change. If the heads of departments D and E tell me that their departments have been coordinated, but I find that practices in these departments are exactly the same as before, then I know that the departments have not been coordinated.[7]

"Acting" Status

1. Do you know of other situations in which difficulties have arisen in connection with the responsibility and authority that go with an "acting" status?
   a. If so, what were some of the difficulties, and how were they dealt with? By whom?

2. What general recommendations would you make to prevent the misunderstandings and friction which tend to develop when someone *occasionally* and *temporarily* assumes the responsibilities and scope of authority that belong to a higher organizational position?

Suggestions for Semantic Analysis

1. In this case,
   a. Do you see any objection to the informal title "Educational Director" as applied by and to the Assistant Director of Nursing Education? If so, what objection(s)?
   b. How might one explain Mrs. Jensen's continued reference to herself as *the* Assistant Director of Nursing, although she knew that Mrs. Ryan was also *an* Assistant Director?

2. Have you known of other situations in which informal job titles were different from official titles? If so, what—if anything—was done by anyone in authority to change either the formal title or the colloquial usage, or both?

3. Would you say that stereotyped thinking may have been associated with a difficulty for any participant in this case? If so, what stereotype, and what might have been done about it? By whom?

Prestige

1. Have you had firsthand experience in situations where a desire for prestige has apparently been a powerful motive for some organizational member?

[7] Adapted from *Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett,* p. 300.

2. Do you know of other situations (not necessarily in hospitals) where, after a formal separation of organizational units, some management representative felt that he (or she) had lost status?

Questions for Summary and Comparison

1. In this case, what issues—if any—seem to you important because they need to be thought about in many different kinds of situations (and not only in hospitals)?

2. Which of these issues—if any—seem(s) important in connection with other cases in this book?

Suggested Reading

1. *Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*, edited by Henry C. Metcalf and L. Urwick, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1942.

2. Paul R. Lawrence, "How to Deal with Resistance to Change," *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 49–57, May–June, 1954.

3. Alvin Zander, "Resistance to Change—Its Analysis and Prevention," *Advanced Management*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 9–11, January, 1950.

4. Harry W. Martin, "Education and Service: Division and Unity," *Nursing Outlook*, 59:650–653, November, 1959.

5. Hugh D. Laughlin, "Education Programs in Service-Centered Hospital Schools," *Nursing Outlook*, 56:268–271, May, 1956.

6. Herman Finer, *Administration and the Nursing Service*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1952.

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CASE XI. THE PROXY CASE

The Incident with Millie

Millie Rich (a weaver) has just come into the office of Sylvester Charles (Personnel Manager).

MILLIE: Oh, Mr. Charles, I'm so worried. You gave me some good advice before. Remember? I sure hope you can help me again now.

MR. CHARLES: I'd certainly be glad to help you if I can, Millie. What's the matter?

MILLIE (waving a piece of paper): What *is* all this? Here they want me to sign for the company. What are they trying to do? And what happens if I don't sign? Could I lose my job?

MR. CHARLES: May I see that paper? (She hands it to him.) Oh, it's about your proxy. You understand about that, don't you? Haven't you signed proxy forms before?

MILLIE: Sure . . . I think so. Isn't that the letter the company sends me every year? At first I used to try and read them. But then I just threw them away. You got to go to college to understand that stuff.

But look! This year I got *two* papers from them. And Barker's been at me—twice.

MR. CHARLES: What did he say?

MILLIE: On Monday he tells me did I sign my proxy. I says "no." So then he says, "I just got a letter from the office telling me to tell you to mail in your proxy." And now, today, he's at me again—with that (indicating the paper which she just gave to Mr. Charles). He says, "Did you sign and mail your proxy yet?" I says, "What's the big idea?" Barker says, "Don't ask me. I just got this from the office."

What I want to know is this: Do I *have* to fill it out? I don't want to lose my job. But I don't understand why it's so important to them, this year. They got something up their sleeve, I know. But what?

(Mr. Charles then asked a few questions, and their conversation ended like this:)

MR. CHARLES: Well, Millie, this isn't anything you need to worry about. When you have the facts clearly in mind, you'll know what to do. I'd be glad to talk it over with you in detail—say tomorrow after work. How would that be? In the meantime, we can both think about it. The thing for you to decide is what will be most profitable for you.

MILLIE: If there's anything in it for me, I'd sure like to hear about that. Thanks, Mr. Charles. I'll be back tomorrow.

Suggestion for Analyzing This Case, as You Read It

Suppose you were in Mr. Charles's position. After looking into the case (getting facts, checking statements, and reviewing what you know), what might you say to Millie "tomorrow"?

* * * * * *

Information on the Case as a Whole

Place and time of the Incident: Forest Mill, Millvale, Massachusetts. There are three thousand employees at Forest Mill (twenty-seven thousand in the company).[1]

"Today" is Wednesday, June 19, 1946.

People immediately connected with this Incident (in order of their appearance, in this report): Millie Rich (a weaver); Sylvester Charles (Personnel Manager at Forest Mill); Arthur Barker (Overseer[2] of the Weaving Room).

More Information from Millie (elicited by questions, during the Incident)

Millie's first communication from management about the proxy was a letter from the New York office. It was sent to her home, where she found it when

[1] See Appendix following this case for notes on the history of the National Woolen Company, the parent corporation.

[2] This title corresponds to first-line supervisor.

she got back from work last Friday (June 14). It was addressed to her as a stockholder of National Woolen Company. Millie assumed that this was merely the regular notice of the annual stockholders' meeting in New York (scheduled this year for July 3). Enclosed was what looked to her like the regular proxy form. She gave both the letter and the form the usual treatment; that is, she threw them away without trying to figure out what they meant. (See Incident for Millie's explanation of her reaction.)

Here's a copy of the 1946 proxy form:

PROXY

Raymond Anderson, John Harris, and George Davis

or any one or more of them, with power to substitute for each, are hereby appointed proxies to vote upon all the stock of the NATIONAL WOOLEN COMPANY standing in the name of the undersigned at the special meeting of the stockholders of said company to be held in New York, New York, July 3, 1946, or at any adjournment thereof, on all matters which may properly come before said meeting.

Said proxies are directed to vote upon the proposed resolution indicated below.

WHERE NO INDICATION IS MADE SAID PROXIES ARE DIRECTED TO VOTE FOR THE RESOLUTION.

YES ______ NO ______ To authorize the exchange by the Company of 7% Cumulative Preferred Stock as set forth in the accompanying proxy statement

Dated ....1946 ____________________

Stockholder's signature
(Executors, Administrators, Trustees, etc. should so indicate when signing)

THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF THE MANAGEMENT. SHARES REPRESENTED WILL BE VOTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS MADE BY THE STOCKHOLDER.

Mr. Barker follows up. This year, however, throwing away the letter and the proxy form didn't end the matter. Soon after Millie reported for work on Monday (June 17), Mr. Barker asked her whether she had signed and mailed her proxy. (See Incident for part of their conversation as reported by Millie.)

Further Communication from Management: Orally and in Writing

First communication to and through Mr. Barker. Mr. Barker's action in speaking to Millie (on Monday, June 17) was in response to a letter which he (and all other overseers) received that day from the Employment Office. When Mr. Charles started looking into this case, he naturally talked with Mr. Barker (Millie's overseer), who showed him the following letter:

To: Mr. Barker

From: Employment Office
Date: June 17, 1946

Subject:
The following employees in your department are the holders of National Woolen Company Stock. Please advise them to mail in their proxies for the next meeting of the stockholders if they have not already done so.

Arthur Barker, Overseer
[Then followed a list of 13 names, including that of Millie Rich.]

/s/ *Frank J. Duncan*
Employment Manager

* * * * * *

Another follow-up from the Employment Department. On Monday (June 17), employee-stockholders at Forest Mill who were "salaried help" received a second letter (this time from the Employment Department) about the proxy form. It read as follows:

Since you are a holder of stock in the National Woolen Company, please mail in your proxy for the next meeting of the stockholders if you have not already done so.

/s/ *Frank J. Duncan*
Employment Manager

Follow-up from the employment department to overseers. On Wednesday, June 19 ("today") Employment Manager Duncan sent a second letter to all overseers in Forest Mill. Enclosed in this letter were copies of a memorandum to be given to employee-stockholders. The following is the text of these two documents:

Letter to Overseers

Subject: Holders of National Woolen Company Stock in Your Department
Relative to the list of the above which I sent you recently, please follow the procedure outlined below.

Exclusive of those you were unable to contact because they were out sick or for some other reason, if you know of any stockholders in your department who have not mailed in their proxies, please give them a copy of the memorandum which I have enclosed.

This memorandum should be marked accordingly, signed by the employee, and returned to the Employment Office.

/s/ *Frank J. Duncan*
Employment Manager

MEMORANDUM[8]

As a stockholder in the National Woolen Company, you are doubtless familiar with the plan for reclassification.

In order to put the plan through by July 3, 1946, it is necessary to have a vote in favor of the plan of 66⅔% of the Preferred Stock as well as 66⅔% of the Common Stock. Inasmuch as there are a great many small holders, every vote counts.

If you have any questions to ask, Mr. Scott will be glad to furnish further information.

If you have destroyed your proxy and desire another one, kindly call and ask Mr. Scott.

Kindly indicate on the bottom of this sheet whether you have mailed in your proxy.

I have not mailed in my proxy to the Company: ______

I have mailed in my proxy to the Company: ______

Signed: ______________________________

Mr. Barker again "obeys orders." In response to this second letter from the Employment Office, Mr. Barker again spoke to Millie and to other weavers in his department. According to his statement to Mr. Charles, he did so even more reluctantly than the first time. (See Incident for his reply to Millie's question: "What's the big idea?")

Notes on Millie Rich, and on Mr. Charles's Position

What about Millie? For the purposes of this case, all you need to know about Millie is this:

In 1946, Millie is forty-five years old. She is unmarried. She lives in Millvale. She started work at Forest Mill thirty years ago (instead of finishing high school). Except for an occasional layoff—owing to lack of work—she has been continuously employed at Forest Mill ever since she was first hired.

Mr. Barker values Miss Rich, both as a good weaver and as a conscientious person with an excellent attendance record. Millie owns ten shares of common stock and two shares of the 7 per cent (noncallable) preferred stock. (See Appendix following this case for details on company stock.)

Mr. Charles's position at Forest Mill. Sylvester Charles came to Forest Mill as Personnel Manager just over a year ago. He reports to the Mill Superintendent, Mr. Scott. He also has a direct report relationship with the Personnel Director at headquarters, in New York City.

[8] A copy of this memorandum was the paper which Millie gave to Mr. Charles during the Incident.

In the early months of 1945, when Mr. Charles first took a position at the National Woolen Company, the Personnel Director at headquarters was trying to persuade top management that it would be worth while to have a personnel manager at each of the company mills. The Personnel Department at Forest Mill is a pilot project, the first experiment along this line. Mr. Charles is naturally anxious to have it succeed.

He is aware that the executive vice-president in the New York office is not favorably disposed toward the idea of a decentralized personnel program. He has reportedly called it "*a circus side show*" and "*an animal training act*." Mr. Charles received confirmation of that attitude when he happened to meet the vice-president on a train trip. In the course of their conversation, the vice-president asked: "*How are you getting on with your wild animals?*"

Mr. Charles considers that an important part of his function is to establish friendly relationships with rank-and-file workers. He has encouraged them to come to him with anything that bothers or puzzles them, saying: "Don't forget. If there's anything you want to know about the mill, just drop in to see me. The door is always open." In this way, he has thought that he could keep the Personnel Director (at headquarters) posted as to how the rank and file feel about things.

Action by Top Management on the Capital Reorganization Plan

Letter from the Treasurer. Early in June, 1946, the Treasurer of National Woolen wrote a form letter, addressed to all mill superintendents. This letter informed them that a special meeting would be held (on July 3, at headquarters in New York City) at which officers of the company would try to secure from stockholders a two-thirds vote of approval for a capital reorganization plan. (For details of that plan, see Appendix following this case.) In this same letter, the Treasurer "requested" that mill superintendents give Clay and Company (a firm of proxy solicitors) "full cooperation."

Indirect "request" to local employment managers. Through the central Personnel Department in New York, the Treasurer also "requested" each local employment manager to follow the instructions (which would be issued by Mr. Clay) for getting employee-stockholders to fill in and mail their proxies. (Therefore, at Forest Mill, Mr. Duncan, Employment Manager, received Mr. Clay's instructions. But there was no direct communication to Mr. Charles.)

Activity by Clay and Company[4]

Clay and Company prepared a special proxy form. Also, having been given a free hand by the management of National Woolen and assured of "full cooperation" from mill superintendents, Mr. Clay decided that (in addition to routine mailing of proxy forms to all stockholders at their home addresses) *employee*-stockholders should also be solicited through channels.[5]

[4] Firms like Clay and Company rarely refer to themselves as proxy solicitors. Even in telephone books they are usually listed under some such title as "advertising agencies," or "public relations specialists." Methods employed by proxy solicitors include the "hard sell" and other kinds of pressure tactics.

[5] A "substantial amount" of the 7 per cent preferred stock was owned by company employees.

Mr. Clay's instructions to local employment managers were as follows:

Each employment manager was to prepare a list of employee-stockholders in the local mill and to forward that list to the mill superintendent. Each such list was to indicate the number of shares currently held by every employee in both classes of stock. Enclosed with these instructions were form letters to be duplicated and used in follow-up. (The letters, given earlier in this case, are copies of those forms.)

Letters Sent from Employment Offices

Mr. Clay's instructions were carried out. At Forest Mill, the first letter (identifying employee-stockholders and containing a complete list[6] of stocks held in each class) was sent on June 14 by Frank Duncan (Employment Manager) to Frederick Scott (Mill Superintendent).

Background Material

Notes on company history. The National Woolen Company was founded in 1889. (Its employees have never joined any union.) Its principal product has always been cloth for uniforms. It prospered greatly during the First World War. Many new mills were added (some of them the largest in the world).

At the height of its prosperity—in 1923—the National Woolen Company owned and operated sixty-one mills. In that year, profits exceeded $6,500,000. Including that figure, profits earned (1889–1922) were more than $100,000,000.[7] This sum sustained the company for years.

From 1924–1931, the company closed thirty-one mills. During the depression years, the management of the company was in the hands of bankers. Except for an inventory windfall in 1933, losses continued. More mills and machinery were sold. By 1936, the company's recent losses amounted to almost $30,000,000. And arrears of $18,000,000 had piled up on the 7 per cent cumulative preferred stock.

In that year, a new president came to National Woolen. The beginning of his administration was written in red ink. Inventory losses in 1937 were $2,250,000. In 1938 they were $4,900,000.

The Second World War brought another period of great earnings for the company. From 1939 to 1946 company profits (after taxes) have amounted to over $80,000,000. But cancellation of contracts with the armed services makes it seem likely that the company's financial history must soon be written in red ink again.

The Capital Reorganization Plan. In brief, the purpose of this plan is to eliminate the 7 per cent cumulative preferred stock. In 1946, arrears on this stock

[6] According to this list, sixty-one employees at Forest Mill own stock in the company. Forty-three hourly rated workers own one hundred fifty-two shares of common stock. Eight of these workers also own eighteen shares of the 7 per cent preferred.

"Overseers and salaried help" (eighteen people) own ninety-nine shares of common stock and fifty-five shares of the 7 per cent preferred. The total stock owned by these sixty-one employees is 5 per cent of the company's common stock, and 2 per cent of the 7 per cent preferred.

[7] With taxes as low as they were then, and before inflation had depreciated the value of the dollar, that sum meant far more to a company than it would today.

(at $58.50 per share) amount to over $20,000,000. And dividends on this stock (which is noncallable) are costing the company about $2,500,000 each year. But if holders of the 7 per cent preferred will voluntarily exchange it for other stock, the liability represented by the 7 per cent preferred will be removed. (See Appendix following this case for detailed information.)

What Is Immediately at Issue?

After reading the preceding pages and the Appendix, how would you define the immediate issue for decision by the personnel manager at Forest Mill?

Your Decisions

If you were in Mr. Charles's position, what might you decide to do; about Millie, and in any other action?

Appendix

The Capital Reorganization Plan and information on stock. In the early months of 1946, officers of the National Woolen Company decided to seek approval from stockholders of a Capital Reorganization Plan.

At this time, the company's capitalization consisted of 400,000 shares of common stock and 350,000 shares of noncallable, 7 per cent cumulative preferred stock.[8]

Arrears on the 7 per cent cumulative preferred stock (at $58.50 per share), now total over $20,000,000 (not counting the dividend for 1946). Annual dividends amount to about $2,500,000. This heavy liability could be eliminated if all holders of this (noncallable) stock would *voluntarily exchange* it for other stock. If the plan works out as hoped, all preferred stock will ultimately be exchanged for common stock (on which dividends do not have to be declared in any given year, and have not been paid since 1924 until this year).

Each share of the 7 per cent can be exchanged for one and one-half shares of a new class of preferred stock, a 4 per cent cumulative, prior preference [9] stock. In addition, a cash bonus of $8.50 will be paid for each share of the 7 per cent that is exchanged. Moreover, each share of the new 4 per cent stock can be traded in for two shares of common stock. (In 1946, a dividend of $12 is being declared on each share of common stock. And all arrears on the 7 per cent preferred will be paid.)

In order that the plan may go into effect, it must be approved by a two-thirds vote of all stock.

The 7 per cent stock has a par value of $100. It is therefore worth $7 a year and is payable before any dividends can be declared on common stock. During

[8] "Noncallable" means that stockholders can hold on to it, regardless of the wishes of company Officers. "Cumulative" means that all dividends are owed to stockholders, even if not declared in any given year. "Preferred" means that dividends will be paid before being paid on other stock.

[9] "Prior preference" means that dividends on this stock will be declared before declaring dividends on either the 7 per cent or the common stock.

the last ten years, dividends have been paid on the 7 per cent preferred each year except in 1938, 1939, and 1942.

The new 4 per cent cumulative prior preference stock has no par value. This stock is callable after 1951. (That is, the ccmpany can buy it back if officers decide to do so.) They will pay $105 if the exchange is voluntary and $100 if the exchange in involuntary.

Dividends on this stock are to be $4 a year. Therefore, if one share of the 7 per cent preferred is exchanged for one and one-half shares of the 4 per cent stock, the dividend will amount to $6.

What will the plan mean for holders of 7% preferred stock? Since dividends and arrears on the 7 per cent preferred are being paid by the company this year, each share of the 7 per cent *that is retained* will bring $65.50 ($58.50 in arrears and $7 as the 1946 dividend).

If holders of the 7 per cent preferred go all the way with the plan (converting each share of 7 per cent for one and one-half shares of 4 per cent stock, and each share of the 4 per cent stock for two shares of common stock), each share of 7 per cent will be converted into three shares of common. At the current rate of $12 for common stock, this will mean $36 (plus the $8.50 cash bonus).

But dividends on common stock do not have to be declared in any given year. And only the 7 per cent stock is permanently noncallable.

Even if the plan goes through (by a two-thirds vote of stock in each class), *no one can be required* to surrender a share of 7 per cent preferred. Thus, if a stockholder *votes for the plan*, for example by marking a proxy form "yes," *he will not have to give up any of his 7 per cent preferred.* (This was one of the points which Millie didn't understand.)

* * * * * *

What Might Be Learned from This Case?

This case (like any other situation) offers opportunities for thinking about more than short-term action by one person. If you were to explore it, seeking its implications for productive interaction between people, what questions would you consider? Here are some suggestions:

Centralized and Decentralized Authority

1. When an important decision is to be made for a corporation, how might top executives get the benefit of insight and experience by local supervisors without surrendering their own right (and duty) to decide?

2. When the opinions and leadership responsibilities of middle and lower management representatives are largely disregarded by top management, does that absolve supervisors from the obligation to exercise leadership toward their subordinates? Why, or why not?

Responsibilities of a Board of Directors

1. In a situation like this case, what part might be played by a board of directors?

a. Because of their legal accountability, what would they *have* to do?

2. What different interest groups would be affected by action such as that taken to win approval for the Capital Reorganization Plan?

3. Which of these groups should be considered by the board of directors?

4. What features of this case suggest that some of these groups may not have received much consideration by members of the board?

Company Policies [10]

1. What company policies (if any) seem to have been applied in this case?

2. Does it seem to you that any other policies (additional ones or different ones) are needed in such a situation? If so, what policies?

3. If there were no clearly formulated policies (for the corporation as a whole) in a case like this one, would a local personnel manager have any responsibility for doing anything about it?

4. If he felt any such responsibility, what positive action could he suitably take?

Communication between Management Representatives

1. Communication from top management.
   a. When a member of top management makes a "request" (such as that made by the treasurer in this case), how may management representatives at lower organizational levels be expected to respond to it?
   b. What words used by Superintendent Scott and Overseer Barker show how they *did* respond to the treasurer's request?
2. Communication to and through "the man in the middle." [11]
   a. How does this case illustrate the following management maxim: "The first-line supervisor is a key man"?
   b. What is indicated about the attitude and position, on the management team, of a supervisor who replies to a worker's question (about the purpose of a request from management): "Don't ask me. I just got this from the office"?

Management Development

1. Suppose you were asked to present, to members of top management at National Woolen, plans for a management development program. What features of this case might you cite as indicating—
   a. A need for developing management representatives, at what organizational levels, and
   b. Opportunities for doing so?

Communication from Management to Workers

1. What are some of the assumptions about effective communication which may be inferred from action taken in trying to influence employee-stockholders?

[10] We use this term to denote a *guide for management decisions,* as compared with an order—which tells someone what to do.

[11] See F. J. Roethlisberger, "The Foreman: Master and Victim of Double Talk."

2. Why do you think Millie feared that she might lose her job if she didn't fill out and return the proxy form?

a. Do you think Mr. Clay would have been surprised to learn that a worker reacted in this way? (On what do you base your inference?)

Line and Staff Relationships

1. To what extent does action taken in this case illustrate accepted organizational theory of the proper relationship between line and staff?

2. What advantages—if any—do you see in preserving the distinction between staff people (whose chief function is to form opinions as experts, and whose relationship with line representatives is advisory) and representatives of operating (or line) management, whose primary responsibilities are to make operating decisions and to give orders to subordinates?

Delegating Authority

What advantages, and risks, of delegation are illustrated by this case?

Outside Experts

1. In a situation like this one, what are some of the advantages—and disadvantages—which might be anticipated when top management hires a firm of outside experts to plan a campaign?

2. What other cases in this book, where an outside expert played a part, illustrate some of the same general ideas and operative principles?

3. If you were advising a chief executive who was considering using an outside expert, what precautions (if any) might you present for his consideration?

Employees as Stockholders

1. What light does this case throw on advantages and disadvantages of having people own stock in the place where they regularly work?

2. In your opinion, what difference (if any) does it make whether the employee-stockholders are (*a*) members of top or middle management, (*b*) first-line supervisors, or (*c*) rank-and-file workers?

3. Do you know of any stock ownership plans which are expressly designed to eliminate some of the difficulties that arose in this case? If so, what are their distinctive features?

Responsibilities of a Local Personnel Manager

1. When a local personnel manager has neither been consulted nor even informed about such a program, does that absolve him of the responsibility to volunteer his opinion as to how it worked out—in his plant? Why, or why not?

2. Would your answer to the previous question be affected by—

a. Whether or not the local personnel manager's opinion was favorable, or unfavorable?

b. How well established he was in the company (that is, the degree of risk to his position which might be incurred by volunteering an unfavorable opinion)?

c. The fact that Mr. Charles's position was a first experiment in decentralized personnel administration?

3. If a local personnel manager should decide to discuss the proxy campaign with the mill superintendent and with overseers, would that make any difference in his obligation to report on it to the central personnel office in New York? Why, or why not?

4. Comment on the following remark (reportedly made by the local personnel manager to a worker): "If there is anything you want to know about the mill, and what's going on . . . just drop in to see me."

a. If you were the mill superintendent, what might you find to criticize in that offer?

Management Practices

1. Which of the following practices were needed, and which were reportedly carried out, in this case: employee counseling, communication through channels, informal communication, bypassing?

2. In the National Woolen Company, at the time of this case, one of the rules (posted in every mill) was as follows: "No solicitation at the mill."

Would it seem to you inconsistent with that rule—

a. To follow the usual practice of mailing proxy forms from the New York office to employee-stockholders? Why, or why not?

b. To follow up such a mailing with oral and written reminders, such as those made to employee-stockholders in this case? Why, or why not?

Indexes of Morale

What comments reportedly made by which persons in this case seem to you significant as indicating the level of their morale?

Means and Ends

1. What is your opinion on the question: "Does the end justify the means?"

a. It is often said that means which might seem questionable in some situations can justifiably be used (1) for the sake of "all-important" ends, or (2) in an emergency. Do you agree with either, or both, of those qualifications? Why, or why not?

b. Would you say that the desirability of getting a favorable vote on the capital reorganization plan puts this case in either of those categories? If so, which?

2. Do you think that personnel managers have any obligation to concern themselves with such ethical principles? Why, or why not?

3. What about representatives of line management? Is formulation and adherence to ethical principles any part of their job? Why, or why not?

Summary Question

How might one summarize what this case shows about opportunities and requirements for getting results in an organization *with* people, or *through* them?

Suggested Reading

1. "Giving Them a Stake in the Company," *Business Week*, pp. 130–132, Mar. 28, 1953. (Summary of a survey, "Stock Purchase Plan—Advantages and Pitfalls," by the National Industrial Conference Board, Inc.)

2. "Workers as Share Owners," *Fortune*, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 56, 60, August, 1955.

3. "Owners Strike," *Business Week*, p. 60, June 9, 1956. (Sixteen hundred Members of the Independent Union at Cleveland Pneumatic Tool Company walked out to express their growing distrust of management policies and procedures for profit sharing.)

4. Laurence Seibel, "Let Your Employees Share the Profits," *Mill and Factory*, vol. 60, no. 4, pp. 81–84, April, 1957.

5. J. J. Jehring, *The Investment and Administration of Profit Sharing Trust Funds: A Research Study of 208 Profit Sharing Trust Funds*, The Profit Sharing Research Foundation, Evanston, Ill., 1957.

APPENDIX I

ABSTRACTS OF ELEVEN FULL-LENGTH CASE REPORTS

CASE I. A DISPLACED SEMINAR GROUP (pp. 3–7)

When the scene opens, members of a university seminar are considering the theory of communication. They are interrupted by two carpenters, who walk into the room and assert: "We're supposed to work here." The ensuing conversation and action provide case material which is used by the seminar group to test a theory of communication.

One issue raised by this case is: What about permissiveness between a teacher and students? Other questions implicit in the situation include: How might requirements for communication between management representatives be more effectively met in such a case? What features of the case illustrate habits and attitudes as preconditioning forces? What are some of the significant differences *in the meaning of the situation*, according to the *angle of view* from which one looks at it (for example, as an outsider, or—among insiders—as a teacher, a student, a maintenance man, a union member, or a person in the registrar's office)? What techniques were used—for what purposes and with what degrees of success—by participants? How important is the factor of personality in such a case? What requirements were imposed by space-time relationships? How effectively were those requirements met?

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CASE II. A NEW VOLUNTEER (pp. 48–59)

This report pictures:

1. The situation for a "green" volunteer, in a hospital blood bank, who has been oriented (somewhat differently) by the Red Cross and by her immediate supervisor in the hospital
2. Some opportunities and difficulties associated with part-time, volunteer service in an organization where most of the regular members are full-time, paid workers; and
3. Issues for a newcomer (who is also an amateur) but who wants to become a full-fledged member in a professional work group

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CASE III. AN ENGINEER AND A MACHINIST (pp. 89–93)

This report shows two situations, in both of which a young engineer plays a leading part. At a seminar meeting, he cites a firsthand experience to prove that "explaining things to workers is a waste of time." In re-viewing that experience after reporting it to the seminar group, the engineer changes his mind about its meaning.

The events which he described were briefly these: An elderly machinist (a fine craftsman) was curious about what happened to the many test rods which he brought to a high degree of perfection. He asked the test engineer, who answered: "Why don't you come to the lab and see for yourself?" Without the benefit of any explanation, the machinist witnessed a "test to destruction," during which one of "his" rods was rapidly reduced to shapeless junk.

Among the questions raised by this case are the following: What constitutes adequate explanation? How can two persons, at the same time and in the same place, have radically different experiences? Is it necessarily true that "workers can't understand what science is all about"? What might be done in such a case to test that hypothesis?

* * * * * *

CASE IV. A LAST-MINUTE REQUEST FOR TIME OFF (pp. 122–136)

This case (which occurred in a hospital) shows how an awkward incident can arise when an organization policy is interpreted in such a way as to encourage a drift of practice away from procedures and from a written rule that are designed to promote efficient scheduling of ward assignments.

Suppose you were in the position of the Assistant Director of Nurses in this case. On the day before Thanksgiving, you are confronted with what amounts to an ultimatum (from Miss Ordway, a ward attendant): Three extra days off, this week end, or else! The hospital owes Miss Ordway three extra days off. But the timing of her request is contrary to a written rule (though this rule has not always been adhered to). What about the fact that other personnel also have extra time off owing to them? On the other hand, you can't force Miss Ordway to meet her ward assignment over the holiday week end (although when she was hired she signed an agreement to accept assignments as scheduled). Her record shows that she has important qualifications for nursing. And she has planned to enter training as a nurse in this hospital.

Right now, she is standing in front of your desk. What will you say to her? And wherever Miss Ordway spends the week end, what further action might you take in this case?

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CASE V. A CASE IN CONCRETE SOCIOLOGY (pp. 242–255)

This report is a condensation of Chester I. Barnard's case: "Riot of the Unemployed at Trenton, N.J., 1935: A Case in Concrete Sociology."

Mr. Barnard's account shows a leading participant living through a situation in several different ways, at different times. (In this respect, it illustrates a cycle of experience.) At a moment of crisis, Mr. Barnard "acted in and reacted to" his environment. At that stage he responded "intuitively." A few hours later, he analyzed the case. "What does it mean" (for immediate action)? In a situation where violence has just broken out, what should be said to representatives of the unemployed who are demanding more relief?

Having dealt with the crisis, Mr. Barnard looks back on his experience. He now analyzes the case "for knowledge, not action."

A reader of the case can exercise "historical imagination" in seeking its meaning for short-term action. In that setting, how might you have answered the unemployed workers' demands? And in analyzing the case "for knowledge" (or for understanding), what attitudes, feelings, and assumptions show through the language of words and of action? If one were dealing with representatives of unemployed persons today, what circumstances would certainly be different? In the 1960s, what considerations, if any, might make a relief administrator respond differently to such demands?

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CASE VI. INSIDE A STUDY GROUP (pp. 301–327)

The setting of this case is the University of California, at Los Angeles.

The report consists of brief quotations, mostly from diaries of graduate students (in a human relations research group), with a few comments by Professors Weschler and Reisel.

These quotations, taken together, indicate a wide range of interpretations as to the meaning of what was said and done during thirty meetings of a study group. The material invites analysis of social and psychological behavior, including habits and skills of language.

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CASE VII. THE "OUTSIDE" INSPECTORS (pp. 328–337)

This case concerns the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and the International Association of Machinists, the Aeronautical Industrial District, Lodge No. 727.

The Meyer Incident reveals a dissatisfaction (which became an official grievance) about job classification. The case as a whole also involves: job descriptions, job titles, rates of pay, and modification of a work assignment.

The immediate issue (which has to be arbitrated) is: Should Harry Meyer be reclassified with a raise in pay? Other questions posed by this case include:

How effective was the preventive work done by management and the union together? How appropriate, and how useful, is it to have a management and a union issue a "joint statement of policy"? What further possibilities can be seen in this case for using organization policies as a means to help people work together toward shared objectives?

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CASE VIII. THE "MISSION" (pp. 337–348)

The Handor Incident sketches the state of affairs (at a military depot) when the executive officer discovers that his C.O. has reassigned, to an outside expert, responsibility for an important (and urgent) "mission." Two weeks ago, the C.O. assigned this same mission to a member of his regular staff, who set up a task force and began to work on his assignment.

After a lengthy and at times sharp argument, the C.O. makes his executive officer responsible for coping with the difficulties occasioned by this dual assignment, and also for successful (and prompt) completion of the mission itself.

If you were on the spot where this executive officer finds himself, what might you do: with a view to meeting major requirements posed by (1) the mission, (2) the presence at the depot of the outside expert who has been promised a "free hand," (3) the position and feelings of the regular officer (to whom the grapevine has carried the news about the outside expert), and (4) members of the task force (all of whom are on the regular staff)? Might you try to do anything—and if so, what—to prevent the recurrence of such awkward incidents? (This isn't the first of its kind at your depot.)

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CASE IX. A CRITIC CRITICIZED (pp. 349–368)

This case concerns the staff and readers of a liberal magazine, the *Saturday Review*.

The Unicorn Incident raises (in acute form) the question of job tenure for the poetry editor. The latest issue of the magazine contains a book review, written by him in strong language, which has infuriated hundreds of readers. But—

Policies, procedures, and practices at the *Saturday Review*, allow great freedom of expression to all staff members. And the editor in chief is deeply concerned to work out an answer to the issue: How can we "make the world safe for diversity"?

Other questions raised by this case include the following: If the poetry editor is kept on and given the same scope that he and all other department heads have previously enjoyed, will the circulation of the magazine be adversely affected? Is strong and partisan language, such as that used in the controversial review, suitable for an official expression by a representative of a liberal magazine? What is the function, and what are the chief responsibilities, of a literary critic? Is it healthy (for literature and for a liberal magazine) occasionally to publish some-

thing which will arouse considerable controversy? By what criteria can one appraise a contemporary art form?

A few of the broader issues are: Who should make organization policy? What kinds of responsibilities and how much authority can a chief executive properly delegate? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of decision by committee?

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CASE X. "CUT OFF?" (pp. 368–377)

The Incident, which starts with an expression of hurt feelings about a Christmas party, indicates that the Assistant Director of Nursing Service (in a hospital) feels "cut off" from the faculty. As the Assistant Director of Nursing Education listens to a flood of grievances, she recognizes how seriously such feelings could interfere with effective work in the Nursing Service Unit and with smooth coordination between Nursing Service and Nursing Education.

The case as a whole opens up such questions as these: What needs to be done in order to translate into effective practice the organizational arrangement by which two vital functions are assigned to "separate but coordinated units"? If a person does some teaching, why isn't she a member of "the faculty"? If one assistant director has a private telephone line and a separate listing, is it appropriate to deny those conveniences (and symbols of prestige) to another assistant director? When a director has two assistants, each with a separate set of responsibilities, what arrangements need to be made about "acting" status (when the director is away)? In a hospital, what kinds of policy are needed? Why? For a person who is preparing to become a professional nurse, what is the relative importance of *clinical experience* (under the auspices of persons in nursing service) and *of theory*—medical and psychological—(as taught in a school of nursing education)?

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CASE XI. THE PROXY CASE (pp. 377–389)

The Incident (which takes place in a textile mill) gives part of a conversation between Millie (a weaver, who owns a few shares of company stock) and a personnel director. Millie is upset. She has come to ask for advice, because she has been subjected to what she regards as unreasonable (and ominous) pressure to fill out and return her proxy.

The personnel director knows how important it is for top management to get the largest possible number of favorable votes on the question that will come up at the next stockholders' meeting. But he naturally wonders: Is it proper for any management representative to advise an employee-stockholder as to what she should do about her shares? If a local personnel director feels doubtful about any program sanctioned by central management, what can he appropriately say and do? In a ticklish situation, is it preferable *not* to report to headquarters that

workers and first-line supervisors feel resentful about orders (transmitted as "requests") from top management? How suitable is it for Managers to delegate to a firm of outside experts authority for giving instructions to—and through—management representatives? What are the implications when such top management requests are routed to overseers and to employee-stockholders through the employment manager in each mill?

APPENDIX II

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